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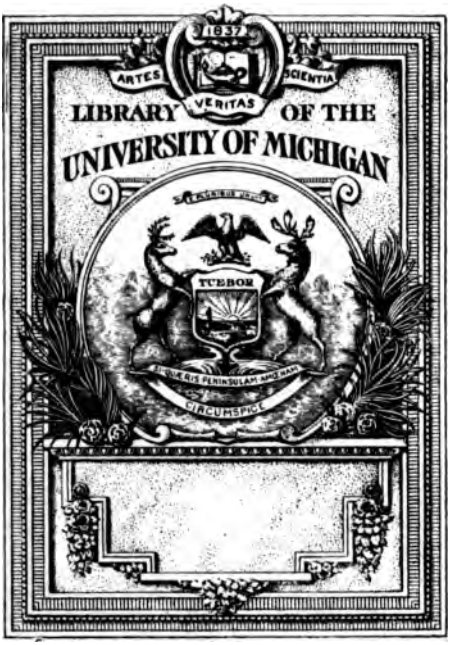
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THE WINNIPEG COUNTRY.

THE

WINNIPEG COUNTRY

OR

Roughing it with an Eclipse Party

BY

A. ROCHESTER FELLOW

With Thirty-two Illustrations and a Map

BOSTON
CUPPLES, UPHAM, & COMPANY
The Old Corner Bookstore
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1886

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THE OTHER FELLOWS.

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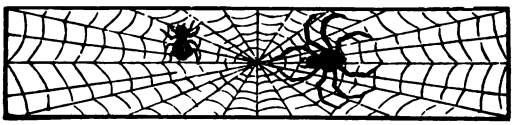

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THE WINNIPEG COUNTRY.

I.

How we reached the Starting-point. — Pioneer Staging.

HO–O–O–O, boys! Hu-u-uh! Huh! huh! huh! hu-u-u-u-uh!" called George, and in an instant our little camp is astir. We hear the men tugging to overturn and raise the canoe; and their interjections over, we know it is being carried to the water. "We might as well get up," says Ides, "or we shall have the tent on our heads." So out into the gray dawn we rush, — three unkempt mortals, — to do our jawning in the open air. The murky waters of Lake Winnipeg plash gently at our feet, as we stretch our eyes

over the sky to see what the prospects of the day may be. In a marvellously short time the North Canoe is loaded; and, as the last instalment, we are ourselves seized by stalwart men, and carried there like babies. Here, settling ourselves as comfortably as we may, half reclining on our blankets, while the men paddle to the rhythm of Narcisse's quaint song, we try to recover before early sunrise the remainder of the sleep so rudely broken in upon.

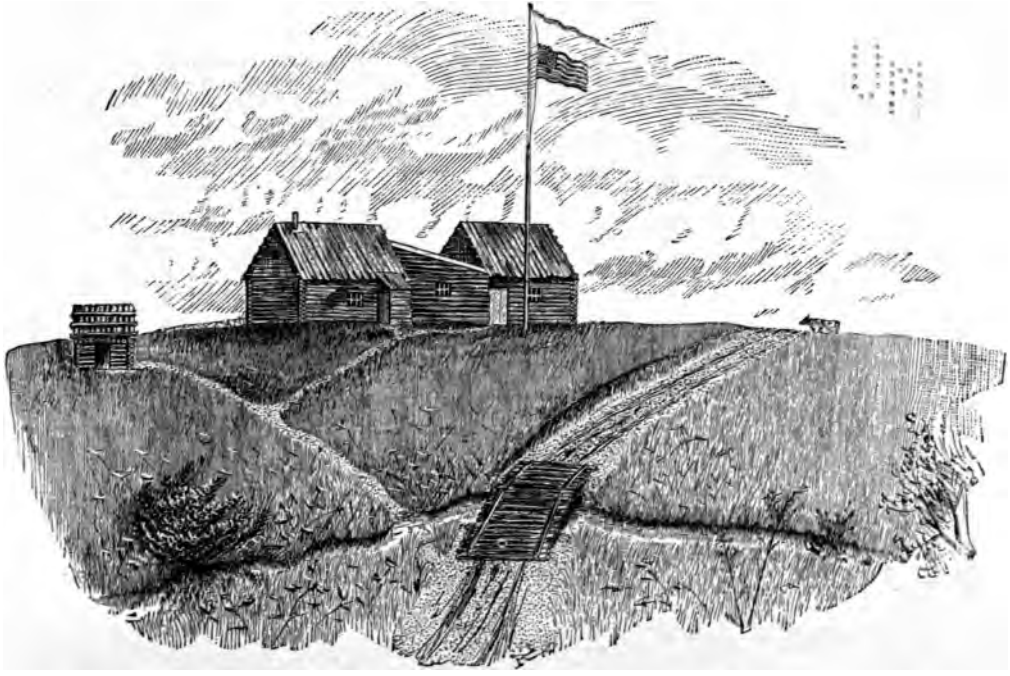
We had started, three of us, — Simon Tarr, Thomas Ides, and Francis Lutterby, — nearly a month before, from Eastern civilization, and were bound for a point in the heart of the Western wilds, about midway between Hudson Strait and Vancouver Island. From east to west across the continent, from Northern Labrador to Northern Oregon, stretched a narrow belt in which for a brief five minutes on a mid-July day the sun, shortly after its rising, would be totally eclipsed. To observe this, was our errand. The Government

had despatched two of its astronomers on this six-thousand-mile journey for the information they were to gain on this single day, while a university museum had added an assistant for the work, that opportunity might be given through him to increase its stores from the little-explored regions through which the expedition would pass.

We had only entered the Upper Lake the day before, and had still before us the long west coast with the detour of Kitchinashi, and on the river, the portage, the rapids, and the long swift-flowing stream. Detention had come at least expected times. Three days had carried us to the confines of civilization at St. Paul, where half as much time was lost in arranging for transit across the prairies, over which a weekly stage-line had just been put in operation by Burbank & Co. We were to traverse it in five days, but six were finally required. An old-fashioned stage took us the first day to St. Cloud. We then changed to a Concord

wagon, in which by eight o'clock of the second day we reached the town of Kandota, and found ourselves fairly on the frontier, the town consisting of two connected log-houses and a barn, and the inhabitants numbering five.

The days passed from bad to worse; for not only were the roads mere trails, and where they ran through timbered country excessively rough and heavy, but there had been for some days heavy rains, and every little while it was, "Out, gentlemen! slewed again!" Through rods of mire and wet grass did we often have to lug by hand our personal effects, telescopes, and heavy chests of alcohol, to repack upon the farther side of some slough. Happy for us if a fence were near when the stage-wheels cut through the yielding sod, for we soon acquired the art of "railing." Once our plight seemed really hopeless; for in mid-prairie, miles from tree or bush, not to mention fence, we were suddenly and badly



KANDOTA, A PIONEER TOWN.

"slewed." Our hind-wheels went in to the hub, the front-wheels nearly as far; our four horses were so bemired, that, still in erect posture, they settled down to rest upon their bellies. All the baggage had to go into the mire; and at last, by the help of a stray rail, the frantic efforts of the horses, and the voluminous blasphemy of the driver, the empty wagon was dragged out to reach solid ground again some twenty rods distant, to which point we must ourselves carry our baggage. This was the way we journeyed in the specially chartered stage for which we had prepaid a heavy price.

It was ten o'clock at night the third day before we made Evansville, another town of one house, the population of which our party doubled that night. The next day the noon relay of horses was missing, and we had to take the same team through to Breckenridge. We were further obliged by the miry road to divide our living freight from our baggage, and to take two spring-

less lumber-wagons with broader tires, which did not add to our enjoyment. Nor were we wholly free from concern about the Indians, especially after dark, as the Chippewas had stolen an ox from Evansville the very night before we were there, and were known to be on the war-path, searching in the neighborhood for a party of sixty Sioux, said to have crossed over from Dacotah, toward which country we were then moving. What if we were taken for Sioux? We looked very like them in the dark! As it happened indeed, a few weeks later, Indians attacked one of Burbank's stages at Breckenridge. But our worst enemy at the moment were the mosquitoes; and a most woe-begone set were we that night, sitting with legs wet to the knee from frequent sloughs, wrapped head and foot with blankets to keep off the mosquitoes, tired to death with our jolting, half-starved, and with small prospect of getting anywhere.

Breckenridge was a more flourishing

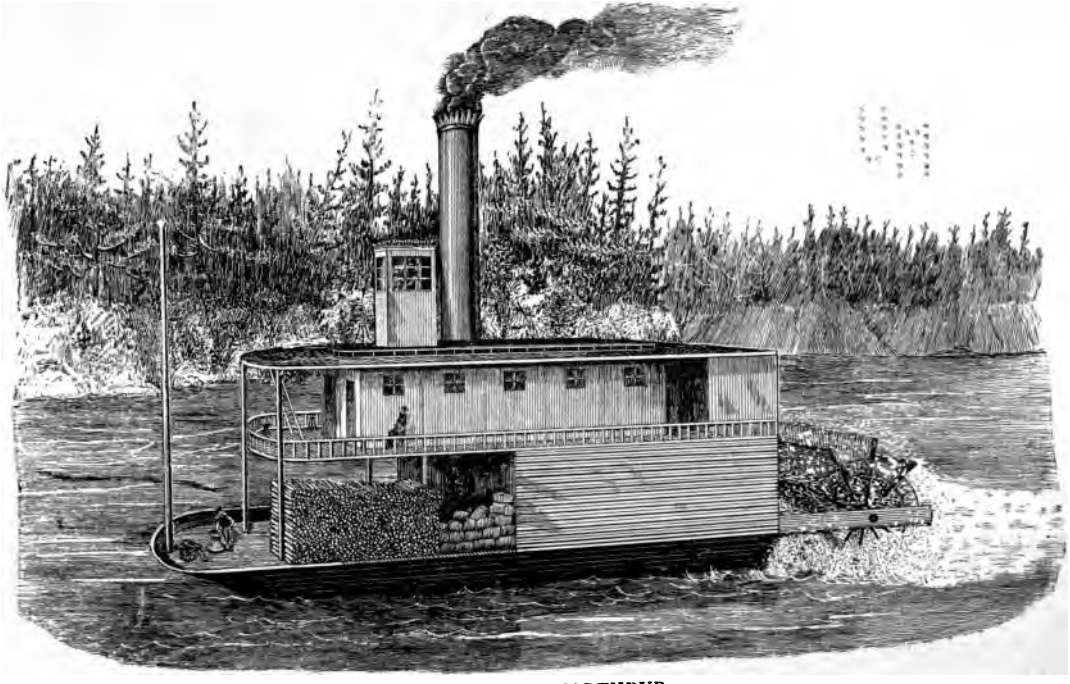
"SLEWED AGAIN."

place, though it had no such appearance to us as we entered at midnight the shanty, half log-house, half dug-out, which already sheltered ten men packed in rows, and lay ourselves down on the floor in buffalo robes to peaceful slumbers. We had reached the Red River; and evidently at least a city was expected, for here was a steam saw-mill. The country for a mile around was staked off into streets and house-lots; and house No. 1 — a four-story frame dwelling — had boldly chosen the centre of the prospective town, quite by itself in the middle of the prairie. By this time we had discovered that a stake pushed into the ground constituted a settlement; a claim-shanty, a town; and a log-house with a bit of fenced ground adjoining it, a city. From the account of a traveller two years later, Breckenridge enjoyed then the same unique character.[1] I am bound to add, that we were not out of gun-shot of that frame-house, as we

[1] See Appendix.

drove off at six the next morning, before we drew trigger on a prairie wolf that crossed our path.

Our course now lay down the Red River; here the road by the timber belt was so bad, and the horses so fatigued, that we were obliged to walk them the entire distance travelled that day, bringing up at a claim-shanty just erected (Campbell's), its flooring the bare ground, and so damp that we pitched our tent by preference. The sixth day, obtaining a relay of horses twenty-four miles on, we managed to reach the end of our stage route by six o'clock. This was at Georgetown, a post of the Hudson Bay Company at the head of steamboat navigation on the Red River, and a very recent settlement, the officer in charge having reached here but a few days before ourselves. An unfinished dwelling-house, a warehouse, and some rude stables were the only permanent buildings yet erected; but a dozen tents, and as many white-topped emigrant



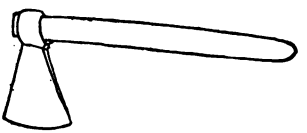
THE ANSON NORTHRUP

wagons, gave the place an appearance of activity which five days' worth of one-house towns made us appreciate.

Here we spent a day and a couple of nights (the latter made memorable to us by the howling of wolves) before the Anson Northrup was ready to start. Even steamboating of the type Red River then furnished was a novelty to us. Like Le Stanley on the Kongo, the Anson Northrup had the year before been carried in pieces across the country, to launch in this virgin stream. She was any thing but a picturesque craft;—a stern-wheeler, with a bow oar, or sweep, worked by deck hands, necessary in steaming around the exceedingly tortuous course of the upper reaches of the river, where we would often see beside us, separated only by a narrow ridge, a stream flowing in the opposite direction to our own, between banks we had passed an hour before.

When wood gave out, we hauled up by the bank, where some Indian had corded

a little for the boat's use; or, if this was not forthcoming, the whole ship's crew was set to felling trees across the open bow, which were then cut into proper lengths on deck, as we pushed our way northward. Our party occupied half the passenger list; but the boat's complement consisted of twenty men, with whom we naturally mixed a good deal in the two and a half days in which we were shut up with them on this tug. The watchman proved a most interesting fellow, — a typical frontiersman of the story-teller, who carried his pocket Virgil, Homer, and Milton with him on buffalo hunts and scouting expeditions, yet could live only in contact with wild nature.



AXE FURNISHED TO INDIANS BY THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY.

II.

The Outfit.

WE lost no time when we finally arrived at the Red River settlements — this bit of ruder European life, thrown haphazard into the wilderness — in making known to the authorities our mission, and receiving from them quick and effective aid. We were immediately despatched down the river on a pointed mud-scow, which they termed a "barge," and confided to the tender mercies of a couple of Saulteaux Indians, cadaverous looking fellows, who, in the course of the afternoon following, brought us to the "Lower" or "Stone" Fort, half way to the mouth of the river, and here we made the outfit for our canoe-voyage.

Such things are quickly arranged at a post, the chief end of which is to receive and despatch traders. Still, ours was a somewhat unusual mission. The old North Canoe of Sir George Simpson was brought out, one of the largest birches ever constructed for use; it measured thirty-three feet in length, and in the middle was five feet three inches wide. It would carry seventeen men and their ordinary light luggage; but we had heavy baggage, and must provision for thirty-five days, so the voyageurs must be few in number, active, stalwart fellows. We had six in all.

The guide must be the first choice; and George Kippling, a half-breed Chippeway, was recommended for that service by the governor of the province, as "the best guide in the country." We looked him over, a fine, straight, honest-looking, wiry, sharp-featured fellow of about fifty-five years, with a short grizzly beard, and long black locks tinged with gray falling on his shoulders, and took him off-hand. He

proved to be all that was said of him, — a tireless, wonderful fellow, of intense energy and devotion, on the watch for every opportunity to push on (yet inspiring confidence by his caution), obliging, full of thought for our comfort, and of abounding good-nature and merriment. With his broad, flat, pan-cake like Scotch cap set jauntily on one side of his head, a red flannel shirt, and a pair of trousers shaped like a long bag, with very short legs, I can see him now, as he half-sits, half-stands, at the stern, his large sweep paddle incessantly in motion on one side or the other even while the men rest, keeping them in good-humor when their spirits flag by his sly remarks or bantering. We engaged him for £6 10*s.* for the trip.

He next selected other men, bringing them to us early the next day for our approval. First the "booseman," who must be a quick-eyed fellow, ready in emergencies, especially upon the river; and to

him we give £5 10*s*. George Whiteford, a Swampy Cree, the only full-blooded Indian of the party, was chosen, — a powerful, thick-set fellow, whom we christened Boozie. The others are engaged for £4 10*s*. One, Narcisse Chastelland, the only Catholic of the party, served as general interpreter, as he spoke English, French, Chippeway, and Cree; sprightly, careless, and vivacious, he betrayed his French extraction, and was at once the life of the party and the leader in its songs. Another, John Omand, was an Orkneyman born at Red River, and the least interesting of all, though quite as brown as any of them. He was the only green hand, and his toughness was sorely tested by the trip. Billy Tate, a half breed Swampy Cree, with tremendous development of muscle, fat, and good-nature, was engaged also as cook and general servant. Tarr thought Billy the ugliest man he ever saw, who led a sober life. "An Epicurean," said he, "would at first sight have

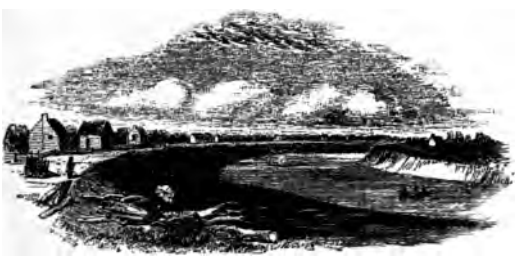
claimed him as a fortuitous concourse of atoms," — a claim which an inspection of his lower lip would have confirmed, this member having evidently been intended for a man of double his size, and could not be made to fit even his enormous mouth; it was adorned also with about a dozen straggling, tapering hairs. Francis Sinclair, a half-breed with more Swampy Cree than British blood in him, filled up the quota.

The height of the men varied from five feet four inches to five feet nine and a half inches, averaging five and a half feet; the average measurement of chest was a little more than forty-one inches, of the humerus nearly thirteen inches, and of the forearm a little more than eleven inches. Excepting the guide, they all dressed much alike. A shirt and trousers fastened by a belt, with place in it for tobacco pouch and knife, with a pair of moccasons, appeared to be their only garments. All wore long hair and rarely

put on a hat or cap. Narcisse parted his hair at the side and left it free; the others in the middle and fastened by a handkerchief bound around the forehead. Their trousers were fastened, just below the knee, by a sort of garter made of twisted grasses, and to which the lower leg was usually rolled. As for language, they used Chippeway or Cree "as came handy."

The provisioning of the party was the next step. For the men this was extremely simple, — 336 pounds of flour and the same of pemmican told all; but they laid in for themselves, from the portion of pay advanced them, a liberal allowance of tea and sugar. Our own stores were abundant but rude, consisting of pemmican, 60 pounds; ham, 36 pounds; salt beef, 50 pounds; salt pork, 45 pounds; dried buffalo meat, 37 pounds; flour, 75 pounds; biscuit, 75 pounds; potatoes, 1 bushel; tea, 4 pounds; sugar, 12 pounds; butter, 10 pounds; with salt, pepper, and mustard. Our utensils (the men fur-

nished those for their own mess) were equally primitive: knife, fork, and spoon, an iron plate, and a tin dipper, each; with a frying pan, iron tea-pot, tin boiling kettle, and wash-dish for all cooking and culinary purposes. Gunny bags served as receptacles for all these articles, and some large pieces of oiled cloth were supplied to keep rain from provisions and baggage whether ashore or afloat. The bags serve admirably for packing where compactness is requisite, as in a canoe carrying, besides the half-ton of provisions, nine men with personal baggage, and the heavy, cumbrous boxes for instruments and collections.

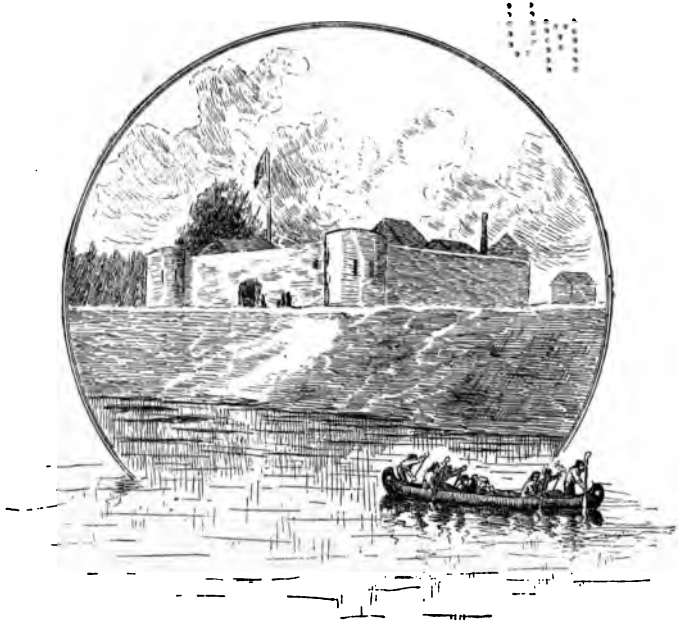


THE LOWER RED RIVER (AFTER HIND).

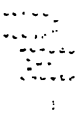
III.

Half-Breeds, Indians, and Mosquitoes.

FOUR o'clock in the afternoon, eighteen days after our departure from the East, first saw us afloat in the slight craft which was to carry us finally to our destination. It was another seven days before we gained the Cat Head on the western shore from which we are now at last about to start. We had spent nearly two of these at the very entrance to the lake, encamped upon a sand-bar, waiting for a sea calm enough to venture on. We had pushed on by night or day, as chance, wind, or wave favored, and by this time were well introduced to the meagre mysteries of the voyageur's life, — pemmican, mosquitoes, and patience.



THE START FROM THE STONE FORT.



At Sandy Bar, we encountered the first Indians we saw away from civilization. They were camped only a little distance from the place we reached at midnight, and came at once to pay us a visit, glum and grim, smoking their long stone pipes. The next morning, learning that they had a sick boy with them, Lutterby, our naturalist and *ex-officio* medicine-man, paid them a visit, taking Billy as interpreter. There were but two lodges, low, conical structures, made of a small forest of poles, interwoven, as it were, with birch-bark, with a small, low opening, closed by a blanket, which could be thrown back and tucked beneath some of the poles. A crowd of gaunt, wolfish-looking dogs gave an unwelcome salute as our friends approached, and then slunk away, with tails reversed; a dozen dirty little heads peered out at the entrance-holes. Billy pushed his way unceremoniously into the lodge where the sick boy lay; but our would-be doctor halted at first just within the

entrance, to accustom his various senses to the abrupt change. Within this hut of about ten feet diameter were, besides our friends and the sick boy, the father, his three wives, and about a dozen boys and girls of various ages and stages of dress and undress. A fire in the centre, where one of the women was tending a little cake of flour and water, — a present from our boys, — filled the place with smoke; a little girl was picking to pieces a half-fledged gull; half-dried and wholly stinking bits of fish and meat were hanging from the poles, or lying about in the dirt; old skins and blankets closed every crevice next the ground; and the poor boy, in a raging fever, half unconscious, and with but a few hours to live, wrapped in a filthy, ragged blanket, lay in this vile atmosphere, at the farthest side from the door. It was a sad sight, and no encouragement of hope could be held out. An interjectory, piteous "Ah-a-a," was the only response of the old man to the words

PHOTOTYPE. THE LEWIS CO.

PHOT. GEOLOG. SURV CANADA.

SWAMPY CREE LODGES ON LAKE WINNIPEG.

of sympathy which Billy interpreted. We sent them a little tea and sugar from our meagre stock; and when, a few weeks later, we passed that way again, we found the inevitable grave.

Several times brigades of barges passed us, when our flag of stars and stripes, which we had manufactured along the route, was saluted, — once by a small cannon from one of the barges; once, also, by the rusty flint-locks of an Indian trader close at hand, in a barge crowded with Indians of all sizes, multitudinous dogs, and a miscellaneous cargo of merchandise, and accompanied by a dozen canoes filled with women and children. We returned the honor with our fowling-piece, as our men kept up a running chatter and banter with the swiftly passing squadron.

These barges, by the way, were strange looking craft, the only boats, besides birch canoes, then found on the waters of the lake. They looked like the vessels of antiquity familiar in illustrated school histo-

ries, low amidships, high and peaked at bow and stern, with a central mast held in place by ropes passing from the peak to both ends and both gunwales; they were about thirty-five feet long and eight or ten feet wide, carried a single square sail, or were propelled by six or eight oars, — clumsy, headlong craft, which a long sweep oar at stern managed with difficulty.

The Fourth of July had been celebrated in a becoming manner. We were encamped in a little cove at the Dog's Head, and had spent the night battling with the hungry mosquitoes. George had hardly finished his prolonged morning call, when a cannon cracker, which one of the philosophers had poked beneath the tent wall into the open, burst with a fine report. This brought George in an instant to the spot to know what was the matter, when the fusillade of an entire bunch thrown out of the tent-door brought out peals of laughter from the boys. During the day

one of them having gone to sleep, a lighted cracker was placed by his companions close beside his head, and the result received with the most boisterous merriment. Not less amused were they in the evening when we had pin-wheels, serpents, and Roman candles, perhaps the first fireworks which ever illumined the waters of Lake Winnipeg.

Our jolly vogageurs were intensely entertained, also, at the performances of our naturalist. This worthy employed his time largely in classifying the different kinds of mosquitoes, which seemed to be the staple animal product of the region, and in the canoe beguiled the weary hours with impaling the unlucky ephemeras and other flying beasts that lit upon the broad back of Francis Sinclair, who paddled directly in front of him. He had his lines out on all possible occasions, but only once caught any thing. Then he astonished the natives by preventing George from braining a fine sunfish which would have made

an excellent meal, and gravely depositing it in his can of alcohol. When a similar disposition was made of a fine cross fox afterward shot, their hilarity knew no bounds. "He's gone to have a booze with the fish!" exclaimed George; and more than once on the voyage did they enjoy a hearty laugh over the mere remembrance of it.

The scenery of the lake was nowhere striking, and indeed a dull monotony of level throughout the entire journey was one of its characteristic features. Not a hill two hundred feet high was seen after leaving the Mississippi until we returned to it. The highest point on the lake was the cliff at Grindstone Point, about thirty-five feet in elevation, unless perchance it were exceeded by the Cat Head, from which, let me assure the reader, we shall soon start. The west shore of the lake was the more level and uninteresting, the rock being a nearly level, thinly stratified limestone, while the eastern shore was

formed of low rounded hills of granite or other heavily bedded rock; but on both sides the shore was backed by, or formed of, a marsh, or "muskeg" as it is called, densely filled with tall bulrushes and sedge, beyond which — when one could see beyond — was a ragged forest of tamarack, juniper, and spruce, intermixed near the muskeg with willow, "popple," and alder. The only relief was in the many islands which filled the shallow lake, and the indented shore line, which made some pretty bays.

As to animal life, aquatic birds, and especially gulls and terns, were not rare, and in some places exceedingly abundant. Other birds, especially songsters, were not common. Fish were exceedingly scarce, and insects, except a few marsh lovers, not abundant.

Yet I must not pass by the mosquito. No, my friend, he will not pass by you! Let me relate the history of a single night. We entered a charming little cove on the

eastern coast to pass the night, before the long traverse to the western shore. Daylight was turning to dusk. Supper over, eaten with haste and imprecations, the philosophers retired to their tent, lighted a candle, fastened every visible opening large enough to admit a mosquito, and then proceeded to slaughter the enemy by the hundreds, by the vigorous use of stray garments, burning afterwards with the candle such as sought the refuge of the ridgepole. After an hour's work, the number was perceptibly diminished, and the tired vanquishers composed themselves for sleep. At first all was peaceful within; but how shall we adequately describe the sound without? Lutterby suggested that it sounded most like a swarm of bees. Ides compared it to the distant hum of all the spindles of Manchester, blended into a musical note. It seemed to pervade all space, and it struck terror to the heart as it seemed to grow in intensity. Soon, however, our philosophers had occupation

enough to forget the sound, and as one beast after another, in rapid succession, fell on the forehead, the neck, the nose, they were obliged to draw their heavy blankets over their heads to escape them; but even then the mosquitoes seemed to find some crevice, and it was too stifling to sleep so.

In despair our philosophers turned to another resort, and getting up, attempted —while the mosquitoes were now stinging them from head to foot, through double shirt and woollen trousers — to light some green wood at the foot of the tent, and make a smudge. This subdued the mosquitoes, and nearly choked the philosophers; but under cover of it, they lay down, and began to lose themselves, when again, the smudge lifting somewhat, the advance guard were at them. Lutterby pulled his insect net over his head, and covered it about the throat with his blanket; but this could not protect the nose, the chin, and the ears, to which, to his

rage, the mosquitoes flocked. Another smudge was made at dead of night; and during the calm which ensued — within, not without — a council of war was held. The naturalist produced various bits of netting, which were thus put to use: Simon Tarr, who lay in the middle, constructed a small wigwam of bent twigs pulled from the bedding, and over it threw a canopy of netting, into which he inserted his head, and covered the flap with his blanket. Ides and Lutterby, each where he lay, propped up the wall of the tent a few inches by crotched sticks, closed the open space with netting, lay down with mouth to opening, and covered himself, head and all, with blankets.

It was difficult to sleep, however. The mosquitoes returned with rage to the attack. Tarr had expected a few to be enclosed in his cranial wigwam, and had planned that they should drink themselves drunk, and then allow him to sleep; but as one and another dropped off his face

with the heavy drone of satiety, and their places were taken by another and another, and Tarr would open his eyes in despair at the sound of the coming ruffians, he could see by the dim light that the netting but a few inches from him was black with a raging horde, the sound of whose fury was most sleep-dispelling; and more than once, in the vain hope of closing some crevice which they must be entering, he opened new loop-holes for their approach. As for the others, the warmth of the air made a thick blanket over the head very uncomfortable, while night was rendered horrid by close proximity to the trumpeting of the outside mob, infuriated by their inability to reach the entrenched, and covering the netting so thickly as fairly to render it difficult to get oxygen through it; nor could these philosophers wholly escape the light artillery of the flying squadrons within. When the welcome morning came, the inside walls of the tent were fairly black with the villains.

But the nights were not long; it was twilight still until near midnight, and in less than an hour thereafter, signs of dawn were visible in the east. The evenings were not infrequently enlivened by an aurora, which usually began near ten o'clock, and lasted just about an hour. It resembled a very long and irregular flag, with vertical stripes, formed by the streamers continually waving about in a most graceful manner. When we camped without cover on the open shore, it was a charming thing to go to sleep by.

When we were aroused in the morning by the stentorian sound of George's call, we never had time to do more than pack our personal effects before they were wanted for the canoe; none whatever for ablutions, which had to be performed afterwards from the canoe, by leaning over the boat's side at the men's resting-spell, and letting the water dry on hands and face, — leaving a more thorough wash until landing again.

BILLY TATE. GEORGE WHITEFORD. FRANCIS SINCLAIR.

PADDLING.

It was curious with what regularity these voyageurs worked; they dipped their paddles exactly once a second, keeping time much of the way to the quaint voyageur's song which Narcisse started, with a "reply" from Boozie, and an occasional jerky accompaniment of Billy; on special occasions all would join. At the end of an hour, as regularly as if they kept a timepiece, they rested for a few minutes. Just before they stopped, they would spurt. Narcisse would cry, "r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-ra! ha!" and then they would double their speed for thirty or forty strokes, and at the signal from the booseman, ship their paddles. Then would come the inevitable smoke. The pipe would be filled with a mixture of tobacco and some weed, or the inner bark of the willow, flint and steel struck against the fungus of the birch; and what with talking and failures to ignite, they never got, nor indeed appeared to care for, more than three or four whiffs, before they started again.

George meanwhile was never idle: he sponged the water from the canoe, spattered in by the paddles, and then taking his sweep-paddle kept the canoe still in motion.

THE CAT HEAD.

IV.

Paddling, Pemmican, and Patience.

AS we paddled nearly fifty miles the day before we reached the Cat Head, it is provoking to be again stopped by the waves an hour after breakfast, and landed on a little sand-spit, backed by a marsh full of mosquitoes, where we must spend the remainder of the day; nor comforting that night to hear the rain pattering on our tent, betokening a storm, and further delay. What is our pleasure to find after breakfast that our men think we may proceed; that the traverse from Point Wigwam, where we are, to the nearest island in the bay, six miles distant, is decided on.

As we leave the little harbor, a tremendous splash beneath our very paddles

startles us. "Nahmă!" cry the men, "ah ha, Nahmă," and we are introduced to the king of the northern waters.

We now try the sail, a rude affair enough, — a square-sail hauled up over a crotched pole in the front part of the canoe, — but by means of which we make much more rapid progress than is our wont; yet not rapid enough for George, who sets the men at work paddling also with all their might, for the wind is increasing rapidly, preventing our return before we go a mile, and necessitating a run of several miles before the wind ere we can gain a haven. Billy, always a dismal prophet, begins to exclaim at the large and increasing size of the waves between us and the Sturgeon Islands, to which we are heading, asserting in short and decided phrase that we can never reach them. The waves grow larger and noisier, and we reckon with anxiety the space that still remains. We speed along as never before, the wave-crests occasion-

ally dashing over our gunwales, the canoe bending and twisting as each wave rushes angrily from stern to bow, and the wind threatening to tear the mast from its frail lashings.

We are glad enough when the lee of one of the Sturgeon Islands is reached at the end of an hour, — the most perilous experienced. Did we know that this island was to be our prison for three miserable days, we should have taken our arrival with less equanimity! Hoping later in the day to be able to push forward, our canoe is not at first unloaded, but merely kept next the shore by small trees falling from the beach across the bow and stern. Landing is made in the pelting rain; and the tent-poles being at the bottom of the canoe, we three philosophers solace ourselves with one umbrella and one rubber blanket between us, until the men have made a sort of wigwam of poles, bent, twisted, and bound together, and on the windward-side have thrown

over it the tent-cover; to this, and the comfort of a roaring fire in front, we then retreat, and bemoan our fate. The days are gliding swiftly by. Ten have passed since leaving Fort Garry. Less than ten remain to the day of the eclipse, after we are at last freed from our prison; and half the journey is not made. It is true that winds will not detain us on the river, but there we will have to contend with the unfailing current.

The island which affords the philosophers at once a shelter and a prison is about a foot above the level of the lake, and about a hundred and fifty yards long by half as wide: so at least we estimate it, but with all our explorations, we are unable to penetrate to either extremity. It is made up of a bulrush muskeg, willow and alder chapparal, sand, and bowlders. We explore nearly half an acre of it with limited success, and have for an outlook fragments of similar islands of equal interest in the near distance.

We are glad to be called at three o'clock on the morning of the fourth day by the ever watchful George, and though the waves are still high, and the traverse ahead a long one, glad enough to venture it. The men hastily arouse themselves, light their pipes, take two or three whiffs, and then, laying hold of the canoe with many interjections and "ughs," they turn it over, and, three men on each side, carry it, stern foremost, into the water, bringing it around as the stern floats, so that it lies broadside in water up to the men's knees. Steersman and bowsman then hold each his end, steadying the canoe, and directing the loading. Narcisse jumps in, and stows away, with the two Georges' help, the boxes and bags which the others bring, working always on the run. An open framework is placed on the floor in the middle, and on it oil-cloth, tent-bag, and blankets are thrown for the philosophers' seats; the men sit on narrow slats slung by thongs about six inches below the

thwarts. The baggage all in, the philosophers are carried out in the same way, the men get in, and the canoe is off.

After rounding Limestone Point, and crossing Portage Bay, we land on a little island for breakfast, which the men by this time have surely earned. Breakfast, dinner, and supper are all one and the same thing. Pemmican, bannocks (simple flour, water, and salt), and hard biscuit are the staples, washed down with tea. Potatoes long since gave out, and the ham and salt beef are so strong that the saltless pemmican is soon preferred. This, too, is the genuine article, just as put up on the plains, — now no longer to be had, — and a vastly different thing from the material of that name put up in England for Arctic travellers.

The meat, cut in long flakes from the warm carcass of the buffalo, and dried in the sun, is afterwards beaten into shreds by flails upon a floor of buffalo-hide on the open prairie; the hide is then sewn

JOHN OMAND. GEORGE KIPPLING. NARCISSE CHASTELLAND.

PADDLING.

into a bag, the meat jammed in, the top sewed up, all but one corner, into which more meat is crowded; and then the fat, which has meanwhile been tried, is poured in scalding hot, filling every crevice. A species of cranberry is often added with the meat. The whole forms a bolster-shaped bag, as solid and as heavy as stone; and in this condition it remains, perhaps for years, until eaten. Each bag weighs from a hundred to a hundred and twenty pounds. One who has tried it will not wonder that it was once used, in the turmoils of the contests between the North-west and Hudson Bay Companies, to form a redoubt, armed with two swivel guns.

We have two ways of preparing this,— one called "rub-a-boo," when it is boiled in a great deal of water, and makes a soup; the other more favorite dish is "rousseau," when it is thrown into the frying-pan, fried in its own fat, with the addition, perhaps, of a little salt pork, and mixed with a small amount of flour or broken biscuit.

But sometimes, when our philosophers are hard put to it, and forced to take their meal in the canoe, the pemmican is eaten raw, chopped out of the bag with a hatchet, and accompanied simply by the biscuit, which has received the soubriquet of "Red-river granite." These wonderful objects, as large as sea-biscuit, are at least three-quarters of an inch in thickness, and against them the naturalist's geological hammer is always brought into requisition.

But the "infidel dish," as we termed rousseau, is by comparison with the others palatable, though it is even then impossible to so disguise it as to avoid the suggestion of tallow candles; and this and the leathery, or India-rubbery, structure of the meat are its chief disqualifications. But even rousseau may loose its charms when taken as a steady diet three times a day for weeks; especially when it is served in the frying-pan, and, breakfast or dinner over, one sees the remnants with the beef or pork all hustled together into the boil-

ing-kettle; the biscuit, broken bannocks, and unwashed cups placed in the bread-bag; the plates, knives, and forks tossed into the meat-dish; and all, combined in the ample folds of an old bit of gunny-cloth which has served daily at once as dishcloth and tablecloth, thrown into the canoe to rest until the next meal, when at last Billy finds time to wash the dishes, — the tablecloth, never.

We are able, indeed, to vary our diet a little now and then, — but they are rare occasions, — by barter with the Indians for fish, which they catch in the streams (not in the lake), by shooting a stray duck, goose, or gull (nothing coming amiss), or — shall we tell it to civilized ears? — by the eggs of sea-fowl, picked up on the sandy islands, where they can be found in every stage of incubation. Our first experience of this was only a few days out, — the day we made the traverse from the west to the east coast. We passed an island where the men dashed ashore to

get a gull they had shot, and brought it back with several dozen eggs besides. The gull measured fifty-six inches in spread of wings, and the eggs were as big as turkeys'. We ordered ham and eggs that night, but, when the meal was served, discovered that Billy had fried the ham indeed, but *boiled* the eggs. They were "fresh," however, Billy declared; for had he not tested them by a plunge in water? Not one, however, but had been under the mother for a week, and some were on the point of hatching. We were a little hesitant at first, but four or five days of pemmican gave us less scruple; and, the Rubicon once crossed, incipient feathers no longer alarm us, and half-hatched gulls' and terns' eggs are an eagerly sought diet. We are indeed fast lapsing into savagery.

We have now a long stretch of tame coast before us, — low-lying forest land of tamarack and spruce, with occasional poplars and willows, edged by a muskeg, and that by a sand beach little indented.

Here and there horizontal layers of limestone crop out a few feet only above the water; and now and then the marshes appear to overflow, as some small stream seeks a dozen outlets for its murky flood. Along this uninteresting shore we fortunately make steady progress. We are glad enough, however, as toward nightfall we espy some Indian lodges, to stop and exchange, with equal relish on both sides, pemmican and tobacco for fresh fish and ducks. As usual, the women come out to the canoe for the barter, wading nearly to their waists, regardless of their clothing, and among them a very pretty maiden of about seventeen with whom our boys pass many a merry word; while the men squat on the beach, speechless, smoking, their faces half hidden behind their knees. This little diversion gives our boys new spirit; and after paddling briskly twelve miles farther, making in all about sixty miles this day, we come to a cosey little harbor and a most welcome fish supper.

The following night proves the coldest we have experienced, the thermometer falling to forty-four degrees (July 10–11). The men awake stiff with their long day's pull and the chilly air, and it is sunrise or nearly four o'clock before we are off, — an unwonted late hour for an auspicious day. But after a time, when at the end of our long uniform coast line we have begun to turn toward the east, to round Cape Kitchinashi, alias "Missineo," the "Big Point," or "Detour," which stretches ten miles or more abruptly into the lake, the wind freshens, and we are forced to the lee of one of the Gull Islands, which we reach by dinner-time and cannot leave until the next morning, finding a bit of grass-land for our bed, but scarcely a stick of wood for a fire.

The next day we paddle from three o'clock in the morning until supper-time, rounding the cape and camping perhaps ten miles north of where we started; the wind being southerly and freshening with

TRACKING ON KITCHINASHI.

the day, we are fortunate in getting around the point to its northern lee shore in season: an hour later might have detained us another day.

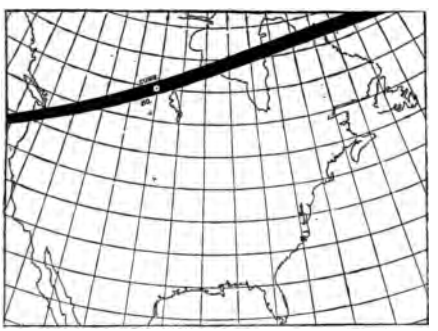
Along this smooth coast we try for the first time a new style of progression, — tracking. A long light line is attached to the canoe near the bow, while to the other end three men upon the beach fasten their tracking or portage straps, — long pieces of rawhide, broad in the middle and ending in thongs; the broad part is passed over the shoulder, the ends fastened to the rope, and thus harnessed, the men drag our canoe at a dog-trot, while George with his sweep-paddle keeps the bow from shore, and Boozie has an eye out for rocks. The water in this portion of Lake Winnipeg is much clearer; and we judge its name, "dirty water," was given it by frequenters of the southern portion. The same difference was noted on the return voyage.

Billy announces "no more sugar;" even

the flour is getting low. The only article of food of which there appears to be an abundance is pemmican, and of this we have already cached a bag on the road, and now make a second cache.

We comfort ourselves, however, by a sight of the shores about and beyond the entrance to the Saskatchewan, which only a northerly or easterly storm can now prevent our reaching on the morrow. Still, we confess to much uneasiness. But five days remain to the eclipse, and George says, and all his men corroborate him, that five days is the least time in which the journey up the river can be made. Are we to miss it by the paltry distance that the eye can traverse? Cumberland House, a Hudson Bay Company's post, is our destination, and is most favorably situated in the very centre of the belt of total eclipse; but the river below it runs in a very oblique course through the belt, so that if we can only reach the Pas, a mission-station some dis-

tance farther down the river, we shall still gain the desired belt, though only its edge, where the period of totality will be very brief. But we say nothing of this to our men.



THE ECLIPSE BELT.

V.

Portaging, Poling, and Promises.

TOWARDS noon the next day we cross the mouth of the Saskatchewan, and land on the northern shore for dinner and to prepare poles of spruce for river use. Each having peeled and fashioned his to his taste, we start up the river; not, however, until we have had our first taste of Saskatchewan mosquitoes, or, rather, they of us. Hitherto I have merely mentioned mosquitoes; but they are the nightly torment of our lives, necessitating the sleep we afterward daily catch in the canoe before breakfast. But those had been semi-civilized mosquitoes. Now we have to deal with veritable barbarians, knowing rest nor night nor day, — the yellow jackets of Culex land, illim-

itable in numbers, ubiquitous, insatiable, indomitable, hot-tongued, with all the spirit of the furies!

The current is swift, and we hug the shore closely to avoid the worst, but on rounding points, the paddles can make no headway against the current, and the men seize their poles, stand erect, and plunge them to the bottom; then with simultaneous shouts and yells, they work as one man, poling the canoe forward till the water spurts over the bows. By and by we reach quieter water, where the paddles are resumed; and so on until we gain a suitable spot, when we all land, and the men track the boat up to the foot of the Grand Falls, while we philosophers foot it through the forest on the edge of the bank. An Indian village stands at the landing-place, and our approach is heralded by a mighty outcry from our distant canine friends. Of all dogs, this Indian breed is the most noisy and the most cowardly.

We do not stay here long. The place is not attractive; for though canoes are in manufacture, and we should like to examine them in various stages, the odor of putrid sturgeon fills the whole atmosphere. Now and then the path through the woods opens and gives us magnificent views of the rushing, surging torrent. It seems almost impossible that our men can haul the canoe up such a place, and indeed they have a hard time of it.

We come across another village, where the chief, with no covering but a shirt, comes forward to salute us, while the small boy (evidently bred in this region for that purpose) drives off the snarling dogs with cuffs and stones. Naked, greasy-looking children, pretty maidens, and fat old squaws sit around, and gaze at us as we file by, filled most with wonderment at our naturalist's fly-net. We overtake a squaw with papoose on back, and walk leisurely to inspect from behind the bundle with the lolling head

WILL PORTAGE FOR PEMMICAN.

At the end of a walk of two or three miles, we find ourselves at the foot of the portage, our men already in advance of us, unloading the canoe. They had been obliged to take out part of the load below, and were now going back for it, securing the aid of an Indian for the hard work, and paying him in pemmican, — the great medium of exchange and sale in this region, where a gold piece would be as much out of place as in the heart of Africa.

On their return every thing is carried up the steep bank, and the canoe, perched upside down on the shoulders of the six men, makes its way through the wilderness to a point above the fiercest rapids. Here they leave it, and on their return we camp for the night. Early the next morning the portage of the goods begins, requiring three trips in all. The same raw-hide is used as in tracking, the thongs being fastened around the two ends of some box or bag, and so adjusted that the load falls against the shoulder-blades,

when the broad, central flat passes over the forehead. Upon this are piled such other articles as can be loosely adjusted without danger of falling, generally weighted by a sack half resting on the head, the whole load amounting to from a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds. With this they start over the road at a dog-trot, and do not stop an instant on the way, — a full mile, — coming back as soon as unloaded for another carry. It takes two hours to accomplish every thing, and all is done before breakfast.

Tarr and Ides go over with the first load, including all the astronomical instruments, while Lutterby stands guard at the starting-point, where a fresh breeze from the river drives the mosquitoes into the woods. The opposite is the case at the other end of the line, and the poor astronomers are obliged to spend their time racing up and down the portage-beach to keep the enemy at bay.

After a hurried breakfast on our part

PORTAGING AT THE GRAND FALLS.

(and that of the mosquitoes), we launch again in the still angry waters. Poling and paddling by turns, we creep steadily up the river, keeping so close to the shore that the branches of the trees often lash our faces. Now and then a pole slips upon a rock beneath, and brings the poler to his back, from which he springs with an angry cry, and recovers his hold. It is a wild scene. The men yell like frantic demons, — all but quiet Francis, who works none the less mightily, and George the guide, on whom depends chiefly the course the boat shall take, plunging his pole now on this side, and now on that, shouting meanwhile his orders to his men. Francis splits and nearly breaks his pole at a most critical point, where the force of the current sends the water spurting up the flanks of the frail bark.

Thus we make our way for three or four miles, in as many hours, until we come to a point where the water surging around a projecting point allows no pas-

sage, and we are obliged to paddle across the broad river in a furious manner, only to bring up on the opposite shore at a point far down the stream. Then the alternate poling and paddling is renewed on that side, till we reach a similar difficulty around a jutting rock, and here another portage becomes necessary.

To add to our delights, a heavy rain comes on. We disembark in a damp, boggy wood swarming with mosquitoes. We are all wet to the skin, so that it is hard to make a fire. Some dried grass is at last found in the protection of a hollow tree, rolled into a ball, a bit of punk from the same tree lighted by flint and steel, and placed in the centre of the ball; this is then swung in half-open hands until a flame bursts out, which is coaxed with birch-bark and small wood, till a fire makes things more cheerful; and dinner of sturgeon in the open air renders the rain less obnoxious.

Portaging the baggage forty rods, and

warping the empty canoe around the rock, consume much time; and we are glad enough to start again. To help matters, while the men work the canoe forward in the swift current, we philosophers take to our feet, making our way (without a path) over fallen trees and through tangle and marsh filled with tall grass saturated with rain. We are finally carried to the canoe from a willowy muskeg, where, in a generally damp condition, we are standing in a foot of water. An hour's more poling brings the canoe to where the river flows through many channels. One and another of these are crossed, and camp made at last on an island near the upper shore.

The next morning we paddle over Cross Lake, — an expansion of the river, — and breakfast on an island in the narrows between that and Cedar Lake. In this we are joined by a half-breed in charge of Cedar-lake House, — a small trading-post of the Hudson Bay Company which we

can see on the opposite shore. He consents to take one of our naturalist's cans, and fill it with various articles against our return, for which the men, too, are grateful, as it lightens their load again. Mr. John De Leon did not know what day it was. Well, what need, hundreds of miles from his nearest civilized neighbors, and only those in his own cabin to speak to? Our men, however, had kept tally by dispensing with bannocks on Sundays, considering their preparation as unnecessary cooking; and so we are able to tell him that this is no bannock day. Alas! the time draws near when all the days are Sundays; — but I anticipate.

After breakfast we enter on Cedar Lake, — an immense expansion of the river where no current is perceptible, — and camp at nightfall on an island near its upper end. Here we have a serious talk with George, explaining how far we have come, and for what purpose, and the weakening chances of our reaching even the Pas, — to such

PHOTOTYPE. THE LEWIS CO.

PHOT. GEOLOG. SURV. CANADA.

A HUDSON BAY COMPANY'S TRADING POST.

good effect that he promises to lose no moment of time. What is our chagrin, on awakening in the morning, to find the wind and waves so high on this pickaninny lake, that the single remaining traverse cannot be undertaken. However, by sunrise the wind begins to die down; and by half-past eight we launch again, and dine at the point where the current again meets us.

Here George begins indeed to redeem his promise, for not only do the men paddle steadily all this day, stopping only for meals, but also all the night long and the following day, stopping indeed only when, just at dusk on the night before the eclipse, our astronomers declare that we have reached the belt of totality, and at a fortunate bend in the river, opposing the sunrise, find ourselves confronted by the first spot of ground a foot above the water which we have seen for twenty-four hours. Indeed, in all this day, we are not able to land to cook a meal, but avail ourselves

of such snags at the river's brink as enable us to build a fire among the half-submerged branches out of a spare paddle or two, or satisfy our hunger with raw pemmican and Red-river granite.

It was curious to watch the effect of this hard pull upon the men the last ten hours. Poor Boozie fell asleep about every half hour, but he managed to keep his seat and his grasp of the paddle until aroused by the shouts and gibes of those who quickly saw the faltering stroke that should guide their movements. Francis and Billy evidently felt that "tired Nature's sweet restorer" wished to get the upper hand, but they fought her with stoical indifference. Poor John was in sad plight, for the entire journey had told upon him, reducing his plump flesh to gauntness; and now he was a picture of woe, as he bravely strove to do his part. At every stroke of the paddle his head rolled to one side or the other as if some sympathetic connection existed between his head and his arms. Narcisse

put a bold face on it by rallying John, shouting at Boozie as he slackened pace, and laughing at things in general. And George, Captain George, how did he stand it? Did his broad paddle cease to ply the water continuously, his that did not gauge its movement by the others? Did he stop at unnecessarily frequent intervals to sop an imaginary puddle in the canoe, to relieve the monotony of the stroke? Not he. Careful and prolonged search at George's countenance failed to disclose the slightest difference in action or in expression from what was customary. The eye was clear, bright, and open; the same pleasant smile, the same quiet manner, greeted one; the paddle moved like the pendulum of a clock. Not the slightest trace of weariness could be detected. At a word from us, George would have kept on a second night to enable us to reach the Pas; but the discovery of this little bank opposite a stream from Moose Lake de-

termined us to test their powers no longer, for the men's strength would be needed for our further preparations, and the eclipse was to commence soon after sunrise.

A SAULTEAUX INDIAN.

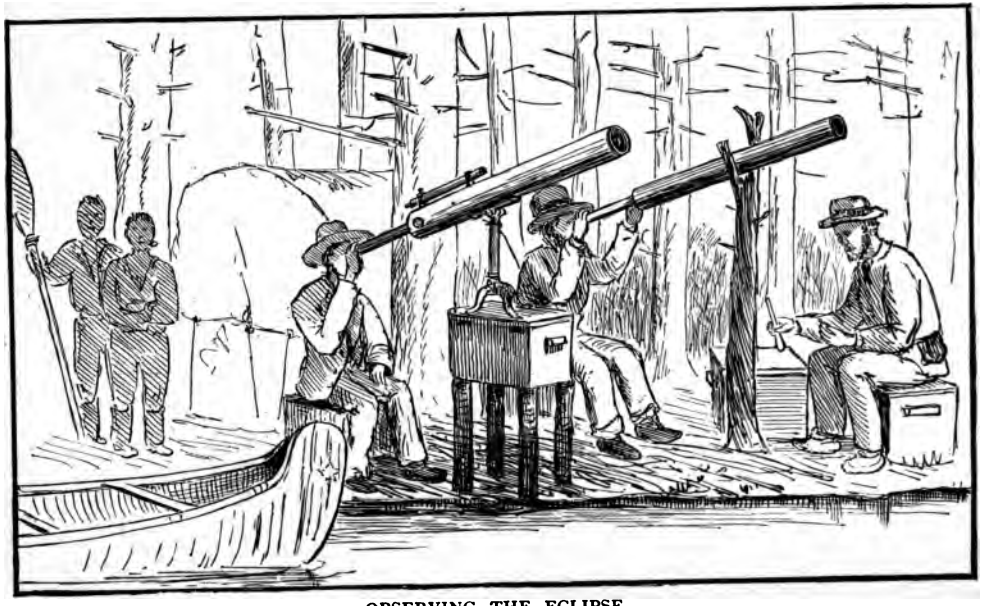
VI.

Eclipse Observations under Difficulties. — An Oasis.

IT is a most unpromising spot where we land in the rain. Only a little ridge of boggy ground, into which one sinks nearly to the level of the river at every step, separates the river from the marsh. The canoe is brought alongside, and the instruments and such provisions as are needed taken out. The men arrange a wigwam in the marsh, and throw over it the tent-cover, strewing boughs upon the floor, and treading them down until something like solidity is gained, and then heap upon them some two or three feet of fir. A thick growth of poplar lines the stream. Supper over, by the light of the fire the men clear away the smaller

trees, using them to make a corduroy to keep above the water. The trunks of four of the larger are made into huge stakes, which are driven very close together well into the ground, and a large box containing one of the naturalist's heavy cans of alcohol is placed upon it as a stand for the larger three-inch telescope. A crotched tree, properly trimmed, serves as the support for the smaller one, while boxes for seats are placed at convenient spots.

Our philosophers are up early the next morning despite the heavy shower which precedes the dawn, and which makes it seem as though all their labor had been thrown away. The crucial time approaching, they explain more fully to the men what is about to transpire, and enjoin complete silence. Alas! to little purpose. Though the clouds are unsteady, they will not part; the eclipse increases; the totality approaches. No sound is heard but the tap of the screw-driver on the alcohol



OBSERVING THE ECLIPSE.

box, as the seated naturalist beats the seconds from the chronometer in his hand, and at the beginning of each new minute enforces it by an audible "one! two! three! four! five!" The gloom deepens and deepens, and then becomes so intense that the chronometer is read with difficulty, when suddenly, at eight seconds and fifteen minutes after eight, a change occurs, and we know the totality is past. Soon thereafter the clouds lift, and permit the remaining phenomena to be observed and timed; and when, an hour later, all is over, we turn to breakfast.

This, then, is our success. Three thousand miles of constant travel occupying five weeks, to reach by heroic endeavor the outer edge of the belt of totality; to sit in a marsh, and view the eclipse through the clouds!

Altitude and meridian observations being taken, the instruments are packed, and as the river is still rising (it turns out that it is higher than for years), and is

now overflowing the very ground on which we stand, we start as speedily as possible, with the intention of reaching the Pas, and a day's rest for the men. After paddling less by six miles than we had counted on, we come at sunset, on rounding a point, into sudden view of a neat little church and a cluster of houses on the first solid ground we have seen for three days.

We are instantly seen, and receive an immediate and cordial welcome, with profuse offers of hospitality on the part of the lonely Christian man who here carries on his work. But bemired as we are, we prefer our own lodgings; our camp is soon made in the open field, where a fire from the good parson's ample wood-pile soon dries us off.

This little settlement consists, first, of a church and schoolhouse in a palisaded enclosure, which also includes a graveyard with palisaded graves (to keep off wolves); then of the parsonage, and Fort Defiance, a log hut roofed with bark held in place

by stones, and which serves as a Hudson Bay trading-store, with a few Indian lodges, and, on the two sides of the river, twenty or thirty rude cabins. Here we spend a couple of days very pleasantly with the parson and his family, attending service wholly in the Cree language, and enjoying this little oasis of civilization to the full.

At the service was a motley gathering in every style of dress and age, even down to papooses strapped on their mother's backs, or leaning in cradle-boards against the walls. Some of the Indians sat on the benches which ranged along the walls, while others preferred squatting on the open floor.

How we enjoyed civilized meals again (what slaves we are to the stomach!) and how we rejoiced at the sight of growing barley and potato-patches, need not be told. We were doubtless equally welcome to these saintly souls, not once in years seeing an educated man, and dependent upon a yearly boat they send to York on

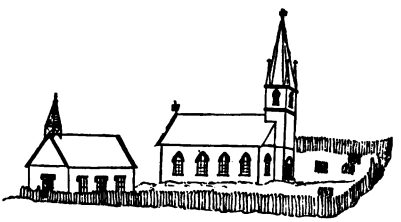
Hudson Bay for tidings of the world, and supplies.

And now we were at our journey's end, and must speedily retrace our steps. Yet notwithstanding the zest with which one always turns homeward, we had no little longings for the beyond. We had not even reached Cumberland House, that ancient post of the Hudson Bay Company, established before our Revolution (1774), and we longed to pass even that distant station, and work our way up the Churchill River to where they stretch out their hands over the long Methye Portage to the Athabasca and McKenzie River people, who may float in their barges to the Arctic Ocean. Imagine the life of the factor of the company forced to occupy Fort Simpson on the McKenzie River, Fort Resolution on the Great Slave Lake, or a post on the distant Great Bear Lake, — vast inland seas scarcely more than known by name to us! During the short summer of those regions, they send or

take their accumulating stocks of furs on barges slowly up the river, and after a brief resting-spell at Fort Resolution, the brigades uniting here from various points work their way up to the twelve-mile Methye Portage, where on the height of land of the northern continent, midway between the Athabasca and the Churchill, they exchange them for what the southern fleets from Red River have brought in stores and yearly news, turn quickly back again to the frigid North and silence. At the time of our expedition it was a two years' journey to these points from Europe.

While here we gained a little insight into the character and characteristics of the Indian. One single matter may be mentioned. A sick woman near by would have none of the medicines offered by the clergyman, — for a clergyman is here perforce a doctor too, — because a conjurer was then at work with her, trying to drive out a devil which had taken possession of

her and which was behaving in a very inconvenient manner; said devil being as hard as a stone, rather round, and about as big as the tips of two fingers, very uneasy, perambulating the whole body. Just then it was somewhere in the region of the heart, where it had come on a journey from the top of the head. There was no doubt about it; the people all agreed that, as the conjurer said so, and the woman said so, that was the end of it.



CHRIST CHURCH AT THE PAS.

VII.

Down the River. — Rapids and Mosquitoes again.

WE do not stay long enough to learn the fate of that poor devil, but start on our return journey just at sunset of July 20, laden with lettuce, radishes, and preserved currants from the garden of our new-made friends. Down the swift current we press so rapidly that it is still ample daylight when we pass our eclipse station. We paddle until ten o'clock, when all hands except the watchful George settle themselves for a night's sleep in somewhat narrow quarters. It is not the first night that we philosophers have tried it, but sleeping three abreast in a width of five feet, and a length not greater, admits of no motion for change of posi-

tion on the part of any one; perhaps fortunately, as more or less water is always spattered in, and by morning we lie in at least an inch of it. This night, however, we are spared that, and are not a little surprised when, on arousing at the men's preparations to land for breakfast, we find ourselves close to Cedar Lake at Drum Island, or, as they say for short in Cree, Kashkebujespuquaneshing (i.e., "tying the mouth of a drum"). In twelve hours, half of the time with only one paddler, we have accomplished what it took thirty hours to do on the way up.

Here we find a young Indian with his wife and two children, just arrived over night; after the fashion of the natives, Lutterby unceremoniously pushes aside the blanket covering the opening to the lodge, and looks in, to see if perhaps madame were "tying the mouth of a drum." Nothing of the sort: a pretty squaw, as squaws go, sits demurely by a smouldering fire, alone, disconsolate, unoccupied;

there is nothing within save a few utensils and old rags. For shame, Mr. Lutterby, to spy out the nakedness of the land!

By dinner-time we have reached the island in Cedar Lake where we before encamped and chafed at our delay, and here we are forced again to stop and even to pass two whole days and nights, getting away finally late one afternoon in rather a heavy sea, from which we escape as soon as we round Rabbit Point. We were tolerably free from mosquitoes during the two windy days we passed on our little island, their place being taken by innumerable spiders, but receive a warm enough welcome to the lee shore where we stop for supper. The fire is built against a log by some shrubbery in a boggy spot — the only available place. We cannot sit down to the meal, but are obliged to eat standing in the smoke of the fire, brandishing a branch from the bushes before our faces with one hand, while the other

carries the food to the mouth. We actually cannot stop brandishing long enough to cut our meat, and sup on biscuit only; below the smoke, the mosquitoes, while we stand scorchingly near the fire, cover our trousers so thickly as to change their color to a gray, and after we get upon the open breezy lake again, it is half an hour before we are rid of their importunities.

I mention this merely as a passing sample of the Saskatchewan mosquito. Our naturalist asserts with truth that every insect he impales is at the cost of several drops of blood; and once they were seen on the river a quarter of a mile distant, as a cloud swooping down upon the philosophers from the East, giving them fortunately just time to cover themselves closely with their blankets, where they preferred smothering to fiendish torture. Yet they did not even then wholly escape, as this is a sort that can bite through moccasins, or through at least one layer of blanket in addition to

ordinary clothing, and have the peculiar faculty, so the philosophers discover, of alighting on their probosces, and steadying themselves afterwards on their legs; — by no means the deliberate, more sanguine, but less sanguineous mosquito of Christendom, which, after alighting, hoists one hind leg as a signal to his companions not to disturb him now, — as he thinks he will begin to suck.

The men paddle all night; and at two o'clock in the morning, we reach Cedar-lake House, where Mr. De Leon, whom the sound of our paddles has doubtless aroused, stands by the alcohol can which he has filled with pelicans and other small-fry for our naturalist. The establishment here consists of two windowless store-houses and a bark-roofed log-cabin with two rooms, each with one door and one window. One window was of glass, with four small lights; the other of parchment. Four families lived here, and we count fourteen dogs.

We make a brief stop only, and by sunrise commence to run the rapids, the booseman standing with a pole ready for any emergency, the men meanwhile paddling to keep the canoe under the control of eagle-eyed George. How the banks fly by! How the canoe bends and creaks and squirms! The waters boil, seethe, foam, and roar beside us, the rapids grow whiter and whiter; but we whiz on with awful velocity, our thwarts only an inch or two from the mighty, rushing flood. Indeed, the water constantly splashes over them. We see a little cove ahead, and are so soon there, that only the most lusty paddling of our men can bring us in. This gives us a chance for breakfast, with a little rest for the men before the worst is undertaken.

By a little after seven we are again in the whirlpools, rushing along with the visibly descending flood. We pass a dozen canoes of Indians on one shore, who have just made a traverse of the river, and are

waiting for their dogs, scattered over the waters half a mile below, between whom we soon scurry by, and, when we are past, hear them baying as they reach the shore. We dash by the rock which had caused us so much trouble and delay on the up-journey, and then away we go across the river, and soon bring up at the portage.

On the road across we turn aside into the woods, where the roar of the torrent was the loudest, and gain the cliff above them. Here the swollen river is pent up between high rocky walls on each side, while the descent is exceedingly rapid, and the waters are white with foam from shore to shore. We dine at the lower end of the portage; and then, as the lower rapids were worse than those above, we walk two or three miles down the bank, while John and Francis portage the usual load this same distance to lighten the canoe, in which the other men run the rapids, reaching the Indian village before us.

When we arrive, we find our boys talking with an old chief, while the banks are crowded with women and children of all ages. The chief is smoking, and wears a "stove-pipe" hat, having broad alternate bands of blue, red, and yellow, extending from rim to crown. On another occasion we met an old chief who wore a silver medal with the effigy of King George on it, which he had received for services rendered in the war of 1812. We are soon dashing down stream again, though the excitement of the fiercer rapids is over, and bring up shortly in the little cove at the mouth of the river, where a fresh north-east wind precludes further movements.

We find enough to entertain us, however; for here are three young Indian women picking gooseberries, while the small and exceedingly dirty baby of one of them crawls naked in the hot sun over the sticks and stones of the beach. Billy is speedily carrying on a flirtation with the

prettiest of them, who has eight rings on one hand and seven on the other, and makes her cook a sturgeon for the men, who eat a second dinner, after which the women prepare to leave in their canoes. The baby is picked up (an act which it resents loudly), tossed naked on its back on the cradle-board over the knees of its mother, who pays no sort of attention to its squalling; a lot of moss is crowded between its legs and in the hollows of the body, and then fold after fold of blanket and skins and rags are pulled over it, and all covered finally by the ornamented cloth which is attached to the cradle-board, and laced up tight. The bundle is then tossed into the canoe, the mother follows, picks it up, and, righting it head upwards, off they go, the child still yelling.

SASKATCHEWAN COMRADES.

VIII.

Lake Navigation. — Delay and Starvation ahead.

THE next morning, an early start is made, and we are glad to find our cache on the island by Cape Kitchinashi intact, as we have run out of flour, and left some here, besides considerable pemmican. We make good progress until four o'clock in the afternoon, when a northerly breeze sets in. Billy, who seems to anticipate every misfortune that ever happens to us, and a great many that do not, says, "It's going to blow up." Never was he nearer the truth. Before we can reach a harbor a little way ahead, to gain which our men now make every effort, the breeze freshens to a gale, and forces us to make a hasty disembarkment in a considerable

surf at much risk to boat and baggage, not to mention our feelings, the men standing waist deep in water as they unload, and flinging the things ashore in the most promiscuous fashion.

Here we camp, and on the next day manage to make the few miles that remain to the end of Kitchinashi; but we cannot round the point, and are condemned to remain here for four long days, during which we see no living being or sign of one besides ourselves. Fortunately our camp is directly on the sea-beach, where we look out upon the broadest expanse of Lake Winnipeg; and there is no fixed time at which we need to return. But pemmican for breakfast, pemmican for dinner, pemmican for supper, is beginning to pall; and we can only move up and down the sea-beach, for behind us is the inevitable muskeg.

Yet, clothed for the purpose, we make one attempt to explore the nature of muskegs. We pass first through a small

reedy marsh, next through a growth of willow, by walking on the roots of which one can keep at the water's level; next to a sparse growth of tall tamarack trees with deep boggy sphagnum moss, beyond which comes a tangled, scarcely penetrable forest of thickly growing tamarack, the ground carpeted with dry moss, inviting a little repose, which the mosquitoes will by no means grant. Finally we reach higher ground, with a rather scant birch and poplar woods, with many rose-bushes and other plants; a vast and reedy swamp succeeding, we conclude that our curiosity has been satisfied. The practical result of the expedition is the discovery of a pool of cool and clean water, — a great comfort, since, wade as far as we may, we cannot, while the wind blows from the south-east, get any thing but the foulest water from the lake, which no amount of standing will leave clear.

The men while away the time in making some new white-birch paddles by means

of the "crooked knife" which every voyageur carries with him, and which is certainly a most convenient thing to handle, and inconvenient to stow away, with its laterally curving blade, and bent, thong-bound handle; these they then paint with some red ochre they obtained from the Indians on the river, and hang them out on the trees to dry.

Before we finally escape from this wind-girt peninsula we discover that all our provisions are getting decidedly low. This discovery is due to personal inspection of the stock. Had we left the condition of our commissary department to be reported on by Billy, it would have come from him two days later in the unequivocal form, "No more biscuit, sir." Fifty pounds of flour and a few biscuit are all, besides meat, that now remain for the entire party, and the cache at Grindstone Point is of pemmican only. We therefore find a new source of anxiety when we remember that it took us fully twelve days to

reach this point. Hereafter, cracker dust and dirt take the place of flour as one of the ingredients of rousseau.

Improvidence, ingrained in the Indian nature, was illustrated on many occasions. Once, early in our voyage, Billy coolly unshipped the mast and hove it overboard, alleging as a reason that they wished no unnecessary weight in the boat; yet before we reached the end of the traverse we were then making, we should have used the sail if we had had a mast, and have gained much more time than the additional weight could have cost.

Late on the fifth morning we determine to start at all hazards, as the wind, though high, is a little less boisterous, and we have only half a mile before rounding the point and gaining a lee shore. The men have to load the canoe, as before to unload it, while standing waist deep in water; and to lighten it the philosophers walk around the point, where they find the bowlders so abundant as to force them

to continue on for two or three miles, before the canoe can safely approach the shore in the swell. After dinner we are able to track again, but when the coast turns southward, the waves again increase, and we run behind the Gull Islands for more quiet water.

Gull Islands well called; the numbers of these fowl make the white sand still whiter, while screaming clouds overhead almost darken the sky. Our men land on one of the islands, and each brings back his hat filled to the brim with eggs; besides this we shoot a goose and six goslings as big as ducks. As usual, all these are despatched at the next meal, while the usual quantity of pemmican is also served. Never, indeed, was a single bit of fresh food left over by them for a second meal. The eggs, as might be imagined, were in various stages of incubation, but nothing comes amiss at this stage of our journey, — we shut our eyes and enjoy the feast as much as the half-breeds.

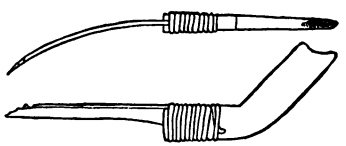
We stop for supper at the lower of the Gull Islands, where the May-flies settle upon us from head to foot, and cover all the victuals, often stupidly alighting on the food on its way to the mouth. One of our party on his return from a short walk comes back so enveloped with them as to wholly change the color of his clothing. We expect to camp here, but soon after supper, the wind subsiding, we find the traverse to the main land possible, when the water also is seen to be everywhere so covered with the exuviæ of ephemeræ that it is impossible to get a clean dipperfull anywhere. The next day, camp being made as soon as we reach the main land, we find the western coast of the lake lined with a windrow of dead May-flies nearly a foot deep, which we afterwards trace from the canoe for twenty miles.

We speed southward this day by paddling, tracking, and sailing, and camp in an old dining spot by Warpath River. The next day we make the long traverse

below this, and pass by Sturgeon Islands, where we were shut up so long on our journey north; we only gain the main land at Point Wigwam by dinner-time, coming in on the white-caps to a spot where we have hardly room to turn in, but which we are forced to make the best of until the next morning. Then, though we start by three o'clock and strive our best to get ahead, shipping no little water, we are obliged in an hour (like many another doubtless), to put about into a harbor, just short of Point Turnagain. After breakfast, however, we are able to make another start, and effect the traverse of Lynx Bay, where we are forced to camp on a beach of paving-stones, which do not make the best bed at night.

Here the afternoon is spent in trying to get some fresh food, as we discover that the flour is nearly gone, and the Red-river granite altogether reduced to cracker-dust mixed with sand. The result is not altogether satisfactory. A few pigeon and

a squirrel only add to the meat-diet, but raspberries are found in scanty numbers, and even a few ootaemina, strawberries or heart-berries as the name means. A few wild pease are voted a success; they are the only vegetables we have tasted since leaving the Pas. It is true they are small, wormy, and bitter; and Ides declares their use a highly irregular and injudicious proceeding. With much persuasion, he is finally induced to try one mouthful, but is obliged at once to turn to pemmican to take out the taste.



THE VOYAGEUR'S "CROOKED KNIFE."

IX.

The Bishop's Loaf. — A Run of Luck.

OUR stone-heap detains an anxious party until the next afternoon, when we launch in a pretty heavy sea, which beats finely against the overhanging cliffs of the Cat Head, the only bit of striking scenery on the lake. The waves lessen to swells, and so we make a comfortable traverse of Kinwow Bay, reaching the other side a little after sunset; rounding Wicked Point to gain the sheltered cove on its southern side, we espy therein a barge and fires, at which our men at once give a loud shout, eliciting an immediate response. We land just beyond their two tents (the tents show that they are not mere traders), and our men whisper to us, "French priests."

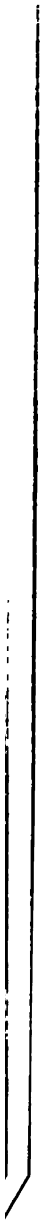
Sure enough, after our fire is kindled, and our tent up, we receive a call from a long-robed man of fine appearance, accompanied by the captain of the boat, who introduces him to us as "His Reverence the Bishop Grandin." This was the sixth year which this devoted priest, then recently consecrated Bishop of Satala, had spent in the heart of the Indian country to the North. He was now on his way to English River with a priest and several nuns. Our men, of course, know the men of his party, and soon return from a visit to them with a welcome addition to their stores in the shape of tea and flour.

Billy too comes with a load, having made known to the good bishop our necessities, and been at once furnished with a loaf of bread, some hard biscuit, tea, and eggs. The loaf is nearly three feet long and more than two feet wide, and is christened the "bishop's loaf;" it is indeed a little musty, and the biscuit on examination reveal various dubious colors, — yel-

PHOTOTYPE. THE LEWIS CO.

PHOT. GEOLOG. SURV. CANADA.

THE WEST SHORE OF LAKE WINNIPEG AT THE CAT HEAD.



low, green, orange, and black contending for supremacy with the normal brown of the Red-river article. It is nothing to us who have now [illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible] still to pass over ground [illegible] to cover on the northward journey. "Hard-looking bread, though," says [illegible].

Scarcely less welcome is a copy of "The Nor-wester," the weekly newspaper of Red River, which we eagerly scan by the firelight to gain a knowledge of the outside world from which we have been so long shut out. Meagre indeed is the news. The entrance of Garibaldi into Sicily, and the arrival of "The Great Eastern" in American waters, [illegible] the world of the result of the presidential conventions which have been holding in "the States."

[illegible] we are glad to express our [illegible] to the Reverend [illegible] we

start again, we hope for the night, as the water is quiet; but George is unwilling to proceed after dark, covered rocks near the shore being abundant in this part of the lake: so finding a sheltered spot a little farther on, the canoe is left afloat and loaded, ready for an early start.

The night is warm, and the mosquitoes thirsty; so two of our philosophers wisely sleep in the canoe, and scarcely know the early hour of start, while the third fights it out on shore. We haul up at Jackfish River for breakfast, and soon receive a visit from a fleet of seven canoes, with about twenty men, women, and children, and a dozen dogs, — Indians that had espied us from their camp up the river. They bring fresh fish to trade (welcome sight!), which we obtain for a little pemmican. Four or five miles below this we are stopped by the wind, and have to camp. Luckily we find here an abundance of wild pease, so that we sup on fried gold-eyes, pease, and the bishop's

loaf, — a royal feast, with not a taste of pemmican.

This evening the men give our craft a thorough overhauling. After the cargo has been landed, the canoe is brought around, bow to the shore, lifted carefully from the water and carried up the beach. Here, with many interjections, the men tip it upside down, turn it broadside to the wind, and prop the lower rail upon a stake. In this position it makes a capital shelter from the rain, which the men on occasion are not slow to use, both for luggage and themselves. While the other men look after the philosophers' tent, the stock of wood, and supper, George and Narcisse inspect the canoe. They first look sharply at the seams, feeling them tenderly, and at every doubtful spot apply their mouths to the pitch and bark to see whether they can suck the air through. Any point needing attention is marked with a bit of charred wood. Then brands are taken from the fire, held next the marked spots,

and the holes closed by pressing the softened pitch with the moistened thumb. This process is, indeed, to a greater or less extent, a nightly one; and the dim figures of the men stooping over the canoe with glowing torches, and apparently making their supper from the pitch, makes a weird picture from our tent.

We are aroused at three by the ever-watchful George, only to round another point, and gain about two miles, where we find a little pond apparently connected with some inland stream discharging itself into the lake; but as the wind rises, and the lake with it, the current turns the opposite way. It rains torrents, and then the sun comes out burning hot, but all the while it blows. To add to our comfort, we find at dinner-time that the fish have not been properly cared for, and are past the demand of even our now not over fastidious stomachs; while some one has been using the bread-bag as a bench, and the bishop's loaf has gone to smash. We

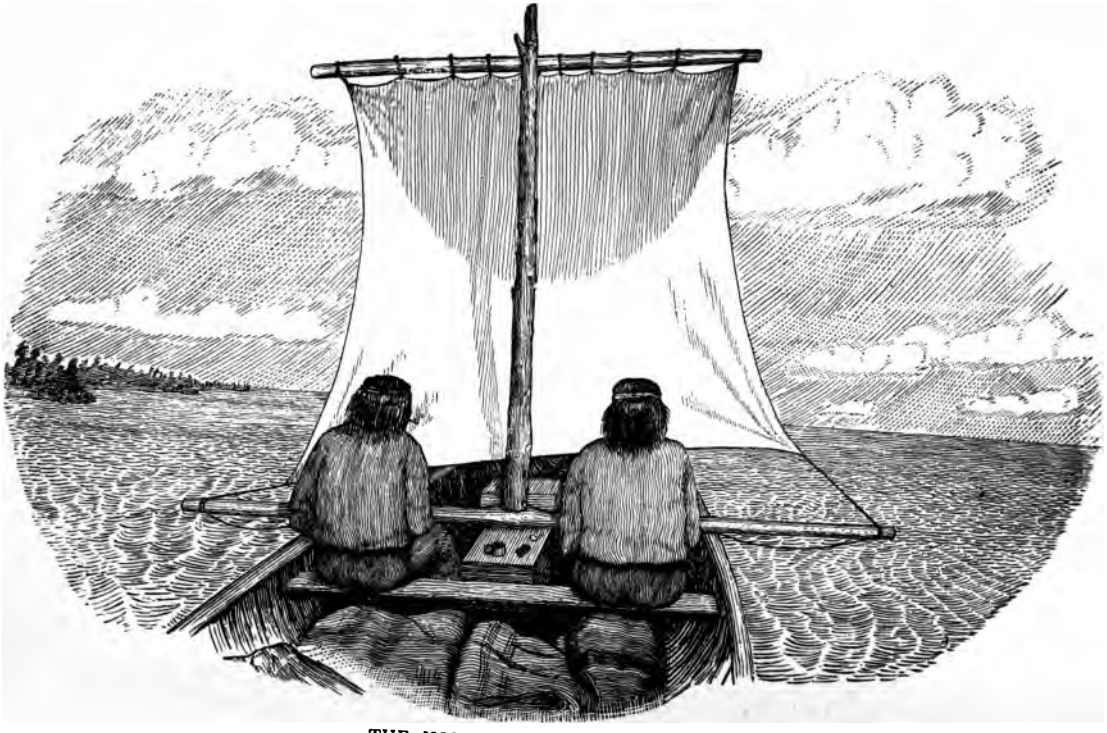
are torn between a fear that if we do not quickly dispose of it, it will turn to mould altogether, and that if we partake of it freely it will not last our journey through. We try to toast our mouldy biscuit before the hot fire, but the heat can only penetrate the outer layer.

We are partially comforted at being able to start again shortly after dinner, and by hoisting sail to make rapid progress homewards, and even to attempt the long traverse among the islands, where the scenery begins to improve somewhat. We land for supper on an island, and then pass rapidly on, still under sail, by Whiteway's Point, now night, and adown the strait between the two sections of the lake. The wind, however, begins to freshen, and we to fear we shall not long be able to continue, when up comes a thunder gust, and forces us to a speedy harbor on the east side of the lake.

Remembering the fight we had with the mosquitoes a little farther up at Dog's

Head, and the storm passing to one side, we betake ourselves with blankets to the rocky point which forms one end of the cove, and choose soft places on the rocks to sleep, where the wind sweeps over us, and, taking boots for pillows, are soon asleep. As each chooses a nice little hollow to sleep in, and as rain comes up in the night, our worthy philosophers find themselves in the morning lying each in a pool of water.

The wind continues; and we solace ourselves with the joyful discovery of blueberries, raspberries, and suskatoomina, — a most toothsome fruit, — until the unexpected cry of George brings us quickly to the canoe. Raising sail before we are out of the tiny harbor, we scud along among the white caps at no little peril, until another thunder gust brings us perforce to shore, scarcely making a harbor, though on this east coast they abound. We are able to start again in the middle of the afternoon, and run down Loon



THE NORTH CANOE UNDER SAIL.

Strait until we reach the point where we must make the traverse to the west coast, — too risky so near night in this sea. So we camp upon the open sand, with no covering, hoping for an early start.

We get it, for it is barely daybreak when we are summoned from a sleep, restless from mosquitoes and rain, to find the showers over indeed, but the sky nasty, our blankets drenched, and much of our clothing wet through to the skin. Glad enough are we when, shivering and stiff, we reach the other side at Grindstone Point by six o'clock. George, however, does not propose to stop, but sends two of the men to find the cached pemmican, with some anxiety now, for of even that but a few pounds are left. Fortunately only a mink or other small animal has found it out; it is woefully mouldy, but every pound is precious. The wind rising while the men are gone, we are forced to land, and fire and breakfast soon restore warmth and comfort.

By ten o'clock we are able to make a fresh start; and, having now the wind with us, we hoist sail, and pass rapidly down the west coast. At dinner we dispose of the last of the eggs, start, again under sail, through the Grassy Narrows to Sandy Bar, where we sup and rejoice in large, fine raspberries, and, alas! the last crumb of the bishop's loaf. When this meal is finished, we find only three biscuit remaining, — one apiece. We scour the place for wild pease, and pick a few in yellow pods, while the men are taking their smoke.

At sunset we start again. The wind has died down, and the men take their paddles with the intention of keeping it up all night. Narcisse starts one of his many weird French-Canadian boat-songs, in the refrain of which Billy, Francis, and Boozie join. The chorus, thrice repeated, has an amusing effect upon our philosophers, because the words sound so precisely like, "I know you left my daugh-augh-ter."

By midnight we stop for a little hot tea and pemmican, and before the men are back, their cargo is fast asleep.

All night long they sing and paddle, and when we philosophers arouse ourselves, we discover a calm sea and the Willow Islands just passed. By breakfast-time we are quite sure of reaching the Red River before the next meal, and pass the scanty remnants of our salt beef and pork over to the men. Billy mixes the very last of our old cracker-dust with our pemmican to make rousseau, and the flour-bag is shaken for the last bannock. Off we go again in fine spirits.

Soon the men land to cut a couple of poles by which to rig a leg-of-mutton sail to use with the quartering wind. John and Boozie are getting sleepy enough; and, the sail rigged, even sturdy Francis lays his head down on the boxes in front of him for a cat-nap. At last, we sight the entrance to Red River, hidden among the rushes, soon land, recover a cached

case of alcohol, eat a second meal from the remains of our mouldy biscuit and twice-cooked rousseau, and before noon, with not a morsel of food left, quit the boisterous lake, and move by sail and paddle past the interminable reeds of the lower river.

Suddenly we emerge upon an Indian town; and the whole village, not the least the dogs, salute us from the bank. Little urchins, shirted but bare-legged, invite us to a race, and take the lead along the bluff, with head erect, expanded chest, and streaming hair, followed by a train of yelping curs. We hoist our flag at the stern as we rapidly gain civilization, and look for the well-remembered landmarks. Green slopes with grazing cattle are a gladsome sight. Soon we are by Francis's house, who lands his bundle, and is back in a trice; next at Mapleton, where most of the men live, and a longer stay is made, the men bringing back a lunch to eat on the way; last of all at George's house, only "long enough to kiss the wife," and

to learn he has a new grandson. By half-past seven the walls of the fort are seen, when a few minutes of rapid paddling, timed to Narcisse's cheery song, brings us to the landing-place; and our long canoe-voyage of forty-two days is over. We had been provisioned for thirty-five.

ENCROACHMENT OF THE LAKE ON A CLAY BANK.

X.

A Unique Settlement and its Neighbors.

LET us now take a look at this unique colony in the wilderness, for here we are forced to spend a fortnight; the first news we receive on landing being that the Red-river steamer is aground on the Goose-river Rapids, more than a hundred miles away! This is all we can learn. There are no other news, no letters, no papers.

What an extraordinary settlement! Here is a colony of about ten thousand souls scattered among plantations for thirty miles along the Red and half as many along the Assiniboine River, almost wholly dependent for intelligence from the outer world on one stern-wheeled steamer. That breaks down; and before word can be sent of their

complete isolation, weeks must pass before the old and painful canoe-route by way of the Lake of the Woods can be opened, or the wagon make its tedious journey to the head-waters of the Red River and back, improvising on the way its own ferries over the swift and deep streams which feed it.

Finding haste of no avail, and despatching our luggage on carts to the Upper Fort and centre of settlement, twenty miles away, we start there on foot the next day to view the land and its inhabitants. The road, the "King's Road," is a mere cart-track in the deep loam, taking its independent course on either side of the houses, all of which front the river in a single wavering line; for the country is given up absolutely to farming, for which the rich mould, said to be three or four feet deep, eminently fits it; and the lots, each with a narrow frontage at the bank of the river, extend back two miles into the prairie. All is at a dead level. John

Omand had asked us to dine at his house; but accidentally passing it without recognizing it from his description, we select a fair representative of the common class of houses, and ask for a dinner.

It is a log-cabin, like all of this class (some few better ones have walls of stone), with a thatched roof, and a rough stone and mortar chimney planted against one wall. Inside is but a single room, well whitewashed, as is indeed the outside, and exceptionally tidy; a bed occupies one corner, a sort of couch another, a rung-ladder leads up to loose boards overhead which form an attic, a trap-door in the middle of the room opens to a small hole in the ground where milk and butter are kept cool; from the beams is suspended a hammock, used as a cradle for the baby; shelves similarly hung hold a scanty stock of plates, knives, and forks; two windows, one on either side, covered with mosquito-netting, admit the light and a modicum of air; chests and boxes supply the place

of seats, with here and there a keg by way of easy-chair. An open fireplace of white-washed clay gives signs of cheer and warmth in the long winter, and a half-dozen books for library complete the scene.

Our hosts feel so "highly honored to have such gentlemen enter their house," — these are their very words, — that it is with the greatest difficulty they are forced to take any compensation for the excellent meal of bread, butter, and rich cream, which they set before us, and to which we do ample justice.

This was not the only interior we saw. We had before called on the single scientific man of the settlement, Donald Gunn, and later in the day are forced by a thunder-storm to seek shelter in the nearest house, where we are also warmly welcomed, and, the rain continuing, are glad to accept the cordial invitations of its inhabitants to pass the night. This is a larger house, but only the father of the

family and his buxom daughter Susie, a lively girl of eighteen or nineteen, are at home, the others being off at the other end of their long and narrow farm, where they have temporary shelter during the harvest.

We have each a chamber to ourselves in the garret, — reached in the same primitive method as before mentioned, — and are shown with a dip of buffalo-tallow to our rooms. The furniture of these consists of a sort of couch, with buffalo-skins for mattress and wolf-skins for sheets and coverlet, a chest for a seat, a punch-bowl of water in a broken chair for washstand, and a torn bit of rag for towel; while a barrel covered with a white cloth serves as a centre-table, and is besprinkled with antique books. Among those in his chamber our naturalist discovers one which appears to be a catechism of human knowledge, containing among other entertaining and instructive information, as an answer to the question, "What is a shark?" the highly satisfactory reply that

it is "An animal having eighty-eight teeth."

Our host absolutely refuses to take any thing but a promise to come again if we have a chance, and leaves upon us a very pleasing impression of these simple-hearted and simple-mannered colonists. Probably but few of those we see are original colonists themselves, but the descendants of those who came under the patronage of the Earl of Selkirk from the north of Scotland and the Orkney Islands, — Celts given to farming. They first came to this region in 1812, more than a year on their journey by way of Hudson Bay and Nelson River, approaching the country from the icy North. They found it inhabited by Indians (Chippeways and Crees) of a peaceful disposition, but subject to war-like incursions from the hostile and bloody Sioux. More than this, the country was the scene of constant dispute and often of serious conflict between the Hudson Bay and North-west Companies, each trying to

outwit the other or force it from the field of Indian trade, until the union of the companies in 1821. Even after comparative quiet was insured, it was hard to be compelled to battle with the flood which now and again destroyed their all, or with the failure, partial or complete, of the buffalo-hunters who supplied their winter needs, especially when their only communication with the outer world was through the tedious and dangerous passage of Hudson Strait; and they were almost absolutely dependent on the not always ready sympathy of the officials of the Hudson Bay Company.

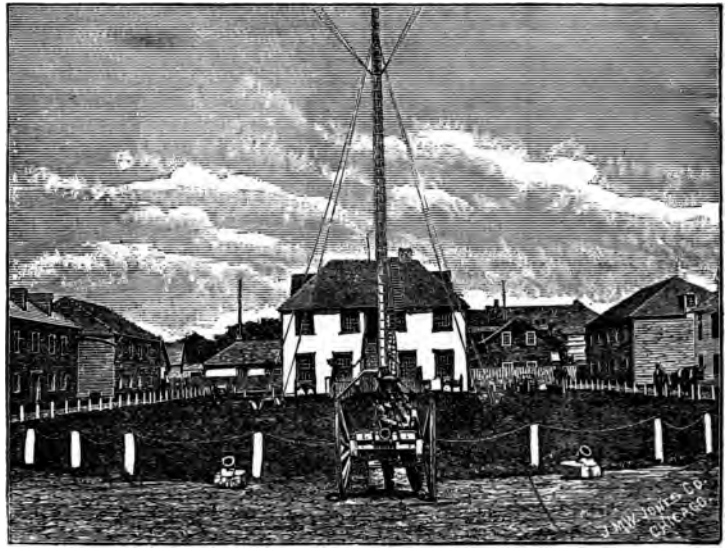
Yet the wants of the colony were few, the peasantry simple and industrious, and their lot in life did not seem to them hard. The earth yielded bountifully, and in time of temporary disaster fishing and hunting stood them in good stead. In process of time two classes of half-breeds sprang up, and at our visit formed the larger part of the population, — one class of British

parentage, partaking largely of their father's character; the other of French, from the intermingling of the French *voyageur* and the Indian, — a lively, wandering, uneasy race, following the religion of their fathers, and from whom have come a large share of the troubles which have beset the colony in more recent time. It was largely from this latter class that the hunters were recruited who, twice a year, ranged the plains to the westward in search of buffalo, accompanied always by many Indians, who live on the outskirts of the colony. Farther and farther have they been compelled to go, until at our visit no buffalo could be found within a hundred miles at nearest. Now they are all in the "happy hunting-grounds."

The hunt is just over as we reach the settlement, and every day carts come in laden with buffalo-meat, hides, and pemmican. The prairie, back from the river by Fort Garry, is dotted with carts, lodges, and tents. Many are living in rude shel-

ters formed of the carts themselves, placed back to back, and the sides secured by hides.

These carts illustrate well the primitive nature and the isolation of the colony. They are the vehicles in universal use, and are built on the general pattern of our one-horse tip-carts, though they do not tip, and not a scrap of iron enters into them. They are without springs of course, and rawhide and wooden pins serve to keep together the pieces out of which they are constructed. As they have no tires, and the sections of the wheel part or crowd together according to the moisture, a train of these carts bringing in the products of the hunt is a strange sight. Each cart has its own peculiar creak, hoarse and grating, and waggles its own individual waggle, graceless and shaky, on the uneven ground. To add to its oddity, the shafts are heavy, straight beams, between which is harnessed an ox, the harness of rawhide without buckles.



INTERIOR VIEW OF FORT GARRY.

Everybody makes for himself what he wishes in this undifferentiated settlement. We return in tatters. Not a tailor, nor anything approaching the description of one, exists here, and a week's search is needed to discover such a being as a shoemaker. A single store in the Hudson Bay Company's post at each of the two forts, twenty miles apart, supplies the goods of the outside world, and the purchaser must furnish the receptacle for carriage. For small goods this invariably consists, as far as we can see, of a red bandanna handkerchief, so that purchases have to be small and frequent; not all of one sort, however, for the native can readily tie up his tea in one corner, his sugar and buttons in two others, and still have one left for normal uses. How many handkerchiefs a day are put to use may be judged from the fact that the average sale of tea at Upper Fort Garry is four large boxes daily, — all, be it remembered, up to this time, brought by ship to Hudson Bay, and

thence by bateaux and portage to the Red River. Regular freightage through the States has hardly commenced at our visit.

Though entrance to any house would be given to a respectable stranger without thought of compensation, there is but one place in the entire settlement where one may claim a lodging, and pay for it,— the Royal Hotel, close by Fort Garry, and the real centre of the settlement. Even this has only been in existence a single year, and it is one of the few houses outside the forts which are of more than a single story. It bears a pair of elk antlers over the door, and will accommodate a dozen or twenty persons. In this vicinity are a few other houses which, like this, do not stand upon the river-bank; among others, the office of "The Nor'wester," a weekly newspaper started the preceding Christmas, — a low, one-storied structure, with a thatched roof, and rough, plastered concrete walls, built in a wooden frame. Two young men are at once editors and

THE NOR'WESTER OFFICE IN 1860.

compositors. It even boasts a sign-board over the door.

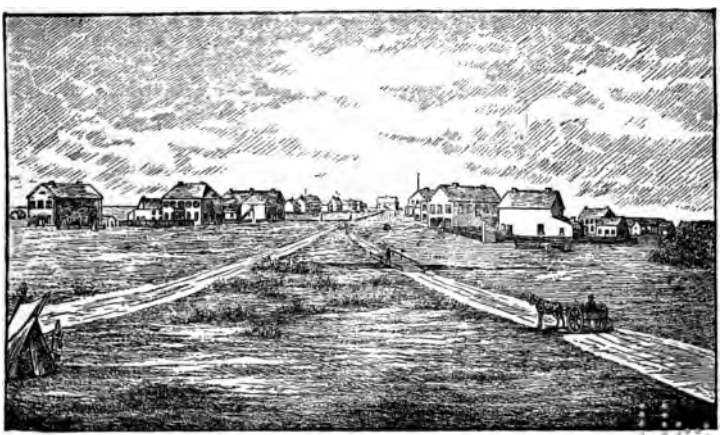
Fort Garry itself, which fronts on the Assiniboine, close to its mouth, stands a little apart, the ground about it being held open by the company; and it contains some buildings of more significance, built of stone or axe-hewn logs, and two and a half stories high, — storehouses for the produce and provisions of the colony, and offices for the company. Their roofs and even their upper stories can be seen rising above the high stone walls, seamed with cracks of age, which enclose the whole, loopholed for musketry, and guarded at the four corners by rounded, bastion-like towers, which are pierced for small artillery. A portion of the wall, however, of older date, is made entirely of logs, now well decayed, and perhaps part of the original structure, about twenty-five years old.

The buildings at the lower fort are somewhat older; the one we occupied dur-

ing our stay there, the residence of the officials, being a stately old mansion with wide verandas, lofty ceilings, heavy, old-fashioned furniture, with plenty of brass, even to swinging knobs on the doors, plastered walls painted green, floors bare of every thing but skins, and open fire-places in every room. The stone wall of the fort itself is about twenty years old, three or four feet thick, pierced for small-arms, and enclosing four or more acres.

During our stay at Fort Garry, we enter many of the Indian lodges, and always find more than the regular occupants within, whether by day or evening, lounging on the ground on a bit of blanket, smoking; each person as he enters drags a blanket from among those tucked under the edges of the tent, seats himself upon it without a word, and lights his pipe from the two or three sticks always burning in the centre. The edge of the tent is the closet; every thing goes there, —blankets, food, utensils, guns, and all, keeping out

FORT GARRY IN 1860.



THE TOWN OF WINNIPEG IN 1871.

what little air might otherwise enter; for the blanket, fastened at the two upper corners over the entrance to the lodge, and forming the door, is almost always kept down. When twelve or fifteen of them get together in a lodge too small to stand erect in, close the door, all take their pipes, and the women smoke some bits of meat for them — this is their elysium.

Yet when the Indian dude "gets himself up," he chooses rather to display himself out of doors, and the amount and variety of toggery one can put on, and the fantastic patterns he can paint on his face, are extremely amusing. One fellow seen had his hair done up in a cue, with a row of brass buttons attached, decreasing in size with great regularity to conform to the width of the cue, which hung to his calves.

At the time of our visit, the Indian women were everywhere dressing the hides of the buffalo just brought in.

These, by one contrivance or another, they hang up by one edge; and after cutting off all the thicker parts, and any flesh which has been left adhering in the field, they dig at it with a sort of iron spud, secured by a thong around the wrist, while the skin is held taut with the other hand. It is afterwards swung like a hammock over a fire of green sticks to cure it.

We see plenty of dancing, as far as the squaw-dance is concerned, for it is going on somewhere every night, and the dull thrum-thrum of the drums can be heard the night through. The dancers consist of both sexes, from four to thirty in number, who move very slowly in a crowded circle, treading on one another's heels as they diddle along, elbows bent and hands drooping, and all partaking in a weird monotonous chant of *hayah* and *hijah*, sung through their noses to the accompaniment of a drum or two, beaten with great regularity and some rapidity by one sitting on the ground, while the children hold up

torches of birch-bark. Impatient of such stupid monotony, one of our philosophers one day seizes one of their drums and plays a rattle-te-bang on it with his finger-tips, as the Yankee boy does upon a tin pan, ending up with resounding applications to head, elbows, and knees; to the great glee of the Indian boys, who vainly attempt to copy the feat. Had our philosopher only remained, he would no doubt have been made a sachem of the Swampy Crees, and this new powwow introduced in his honor.

Their graves, which we have seen at various points from Pembina to the Saskatchewan, are made on the same model; the mounds are covered with minature wigwams, sometimes of split stakes driven obliquely into the earth, sometimes of sticks covered with birch-bark. What is curious is that their form is tent-shaped and not copied after their conical lodges. Can it be that the ancestry from whom this custom must have been derived, dwelt

in what are called long houses?[1] A little hole is always left at one end "for the spirit to crawl out of," and within is always to be seen the remains of a green twig that has been laid there, or a white stone; and if it be a male, a stick at the head, painted red with some carving on it, to designate the totem of the departed. Before the grave a miniature pile of wood is laid for a fire, and on the end of a long stick thrust in the ground a little offering to the Manitou, — a bit of fur or rag or scarf, or even a mere green twig.

I have said that the houses about Upper Fort Garry were not all placed on the very banks of the river. In this way they were then beginning to cluster together a little. This indeed was the nucleus of the present city of Winnipeg, with its hotels and shops, banks, horse-cars, and educational institutions, its lines of steamers and railways, connecting it with all

[1] Though we saw none of these, yet Hind figures one seen at the settlements, made by Chippeways.

PHOTOTYPE. THE LEWIS CO. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

THE CITY OF WINNIPEG IN 1885.

points of the compass. In 1847 Sir George Simpson could write, "The nearest names of civilization are the village of Sault St. Marie, which itself has a reasonable share of elbow room; St. Peter's at the Falls of the Mississippi, which is merely the single island in a vast ocean of wilderness; and lastly York Factory on Hudson Bay, where an annual ship anchors after a voyage of nearly two months, even from the Ultima Thule of Stromness." Thirteen years later, at our visit, a flourishing city stood by the Falls of St. Anthony, borrowing its name from another apostle (for "there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest"); no longer in a "vast ocean of wilderness," but surrounded by growing villages, though nothing worthy of even that name could be found nearer the Red River Settlements than Crow Wing on the upper Mississippi, nearly as far away as Lake Superior, unless the few shanties around the stockade at Pembina on the

border be so regarded.[1] Beyond our border the aspect had not changed, excepting that they were now beginning to reach out their hands toward the approaching stranger, and, banding together for safety, threaded their way in caravans through the territory still subject to the roaming savage, to barter their peltry for the more varied products of the new world opened to them. Several such caravans we had met on our outward journey. At last they were becoming independent of the "Hudson Bay Company of Adventurers," and were beginning to feel the throbbing of the world's pulse. Then in rapid strides came the changes I have mentioned, which have culminated in the advent of the railway. The simplicity and picturesqueness

[1] It might however be remarked that Pembina is said to have polled fifteen hundred Democratic votes in the Minnesota election of 1859 (?), before Dacotah was separated off. It is also said that the messenger conveying the official declarations to this effect was robbed of his papers on the way to Minneapolis, while indulging in a spree. However, he manufactured a new set the next morning and kept on.

of the Selkirk Settlements have gone, never to return ; nor can the experiment be now repeated — at least with so long a history — in any quarter of the globe. Modern life is too quick.

A WINDMILL AT THE SETTLEMENTS.

XI.

Three Weeks in an Ox-cart.

NOT many days after our arrival at Fort Garry, the captain and some of the crew of the grounded steamboat arrive, bringing with them, in a big flat boat, the belated passengers, — a company of twenty-seven persons. They report the steamer as laid up for the winter, and the great question our philosophers have now to solve is how to get out of the trap in which they are caught. Two of the passengers, Boston boys, came down with the intention of making the journey out, by way of the Lake of the Woods; but the difficulty of procuring good guides, and the length of the journey, have deterred them, and they join our philosophers over the puzzle. The "fall trains" to St. Paul

are not to start for nearly a month, at the completion of harvest; but, by dint of persuasion and gold, our host of the Royal Hotel, Mr. McKinney, a stalwart Canadian and a brother-in-law of the Dr. Schultz who afterward figured so largely in Manitoba history, finally agrees, on so good a nucleus, to start a train himself. A clergyman of the settlement and his wife (who by the way has never seen a railway), the wife of one of the Hudson Bay Company's factors, going under their escort to her Scottish home, a gentleman from St. Paul, a returned miner from Colville Valley, and a theological student from Toronto University, add their names to the list; and in a little more than a week after the advent of the steamer's company, our little caravan takes its departure. To the eleven patrons of the party are added Mr. McKinney, who goes as master of the train, and eight teamsters and servants, mostly half-breeds. The driver who takes the philosophers under his special care

rejoices in the name of Malcolm McIver; one other is detailed as special servant for the ladies; while Sandin the cook, having served as a clown in a circus, and being able to stand on the brink of a brook, bend his body backward, thrust his head between his legs, and drink from the brook, turns out to have other accomplishments than those affecting the cuisine.

It is a stylish enough turnout for Red River. Three large emigrant-wagons, with canvas coverings of the most approved pattern, but of very different hues, drawn each by a yoke of oxen, convey the patrons of the party, with the exception of the miner, who rides his horse. The philosophers take the lead under a brown canvas; the miscellaneous gentlemen follow under a black canvas full of holes; while the third wagon, with a cover of spotless purity, conveys the ladies and the clergyman.

Stylish enough at the front, but deteriorating toward the tail, for there follow,

PHOTOTYPE. THE LEWIS CO. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

RED RIVER CART.

not only half-a-dozen Red-river carts, with a most promiscuous assortment of baggage, peltry, and squeak, drawn mostly by oxen, but also a stray ox and pony or two, a number of armed horsemen, and a troop of friends from the settlement, come, as is their wont, to see their friends off, — some on ponies, and some in vehicles of all sorts, even including a most discordant buggy. Although these friends pass only the first night with us, our caravan increases rather than diminishes as we go along, — just how we do not see, but probably by the nocturnal advent of some belated party, who wishes to take this opportunity of escaping to the outer world, or of providing at an early day for his winter wants. At any rate, when we are three or four days out, our train is by no means an insignificant one, as it threads its way over the prairie in its devious course, a dozen mounted warriors in advance on the lookout for signs of Indians, followed by about two dozen carts, numer-

ous cattle and ponies dangling along for half a mile, and one poor buffalo whose calf is tied on the floor of one of the jolting carts, where it perishes miserably on the road.

Ferrying over the Assiniboine, which must be done at the very outset, detains us a couple of hours, so that, as we start after dinner, we are soon obliged to camp. Our road lies southward along the Red River, but here at some distance from it, so that on camping we can find no water beyond what can be baled painfully out of a neighboring marsh; and wood is so scarce that it is difficult to procure enough to cook by. The lack of any thing more than the ghost of a camp-fire does not, however, seem to dampen the hilarious ardor of our Red-river guests, and the camp is not quiet until the small hours of the morning. We are roused again by four o'clock; but in the dense fog it takes so long to gather in the wandering cattle, that it is half-past five before we bid our

jovial friends adieu, and start breakfastless on our five-hundred-mile journey over the plains.

As in canoeing, with few exceptions, one day is much like another, only here the weather is not allowed in the least to interfere with movement. We are always up by daybreak, and travel an hour or two before we breakfast; another spell of travel, and then a longer rest, as the cattle must be allowed to graze to their content. An old bit of straw-matting is spread on the grass, the dishes piled on it promiscuously, and we seat ourselves, Turk-fashion, until Sandin, by the fire to leeward, has boiled the tea and meat. Hard tack and pemmican are again our staples. After a few hours more of joggling, during which our principal occupation, as in the morning, is card-playing on the floor of the wagon, seated on buffalo-skins, our camp is pitched at some favorable spot, — sometimes, however, not reached until far into

the night. But however late or however early we may camp, the dawn sees us astir. And so day after day passes by, its monotony rarely relieved by any stirring events, excepting when it becomes necessary to cross a river. Then there is always some fun.

In crossing Scratching River, north of the boundary, we find a house, and an apology for a ferry in the shape of a rickety scow, three-fourths full of water, shaky stakes to which to fasten the ferry-ropes, and a couple of cripples to manage it, who charge a quarter of a dollar per head for the service. We actually effect a safe passage, though one load nearly capsizes, with our own wagon on it. This was the way of it: one of the thirsty oxen rushed to the side of the boat for a drink, overweighting the scow's side so suddenly that the ox, still yoked, tumbled into the river, and was with difficulty unyoked during his flounderings, while we rushed to the opposite side as a make-weight.

DINNER ON THE PRAIRIE.

The lively fun, however, comes when we reach the first of the Two Rivers, narrow, deep, and swift streams, reached shortly after we had crossed and left the Red River, and were making our way in a diagonal course through the State of Minnesota. Here the only apparent means of crossing is a canoe with one end completely stove in; by means of which, however, one of the men, with a long thong trailing behind him, manages to reach the opposite shore just as it fills. But the men are quite equal to the occasion; the box of the philosophers' wagon is removed from its truck, the covering, together with that of one of the other wagons, wrapped around the bottom and sides, long thongs attached to its two ends, and behold! a ferry-boat. It is launched, filled with baggage, and while the man on the other shore drags the boat over as swiftly as possible, a light fellow rides over to balance it in the eddies, and to bale out the leakage as fast

as possible; though with all his efforts it always arrives half full of water, to the no small detriment of its baggage, and several times it is nearly swamped. It is easily pulled back empty, with two men afterward to do the heavy hauling.

So it goes on until it comes the passengers' turn. A large box is then placed at the bottom, and on this another, as a seat above the waters, on which the ladies are ferried over singly, not without fright, being warned by repeated shouts to "keep *perfectly* still," as they begin to shriek at the rapid filling of the strange craft in mid-stream. Horses and oxen are swum across, with many ludicrous adventures, while the carts are drawn over by a yoke of oxen on the opposite shore attached to a long line, a man swimming at the tail of each cart to keep it from upsetting. As the stream is full of huge sunken trees, the banks high, precipitous, and of a most tenacious clay, and the crossing has to be made in the rain, we

are not a little disgusted to find the second of the Two Rivers close at hand, and quite as bad as the first. This over, however, the remaining rivers are fordable until we reach the Mississippi opposite Crow Wing, where it is again provided with a ferry.

Here, however, a ludicrous disaster occurs. The ferry-boat is small, and only two of the Red-river carts can be accommodated on it at once. Now, Sandin has two carts in charge, one containing bales of peltry, the other the provisions, the cooking utensils, and a barrel containing the bones of the buffalo-calf deceased *en route*, which the naturalist prepared, on one of the jolting, rickety carts, in the broiling sun, alternating with heavy showers, at much risk, and with the loss of one dinner.

The ox in the cart in advance is a wild creature, which has given Sandin no end of trouble, and when he is driven upon the unsteady ferry-boat, makes no stop at the farther end, but leaps headlong

into the deep river, pulling after him not only his own cart as a matter of course, but also the hinder ox and cart, attached to the tail of his own by a raw-hide thong, which only breaks too late to prevent the double catastrophe. Every thing is upset, and down the Mississippi go floating no end of boxes, bales, pails, kegs, and barrels, while the oxen, with empty carts but with infinite difficulty, paddle their own way across to the distant bank, and are finally rescued a mile or more down stream, completely exhausted. Sandin jumps into a dug-out at hand, and, cook-like, rescues first his pots and kettles, and then the more valuable stuff.

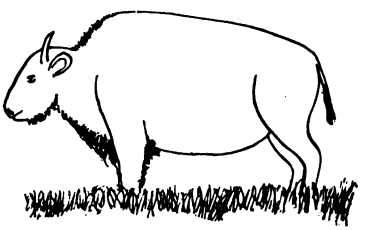
The poor naturalist's anxiety about the rescue of the buffalo-bones, over which he has expended so much time and pains, draws down upon his innocent head the imprecations of the master of the train, whose most valuable furs have been wet through and through, and the unmerited scorn of his companions, who gaze with

mournful countenance upon soaked biscuit, tea, and sugar. On two former occasions the hard-tack had been rescued one by one from a watery grave, not improving their quality; and as a day's delay here is necessary to dry the soaked skins, not only these but biscuit, *tea* and *sugar* are spread out into the sun to dry. At every meal thereafter we are reminded of the Father of Waters. There is something a little insipid about the food.

Had we delayed our journey a single week, we should have met a couple of thousand Indians at Red Lake River, assembled to make a treaty with the Government. So at least Gen. Patterson tells us, who meets us here. As it is, we see very few; Buffalo, and Mrs. and Miss Buffalo, with Gen. Patterson, and Hole-in-the-Day riding in a buggy on his way to them, being the more notable. At the season in which we cross the prairies — for it is prairie-land the entire distance — there is no game, and, until we reach the

lake region, we only once or twice see any thing larger than a gopher, namely, a bear and a deer; even birds are scarce, a few dozen prairie-chickens and ducks, and a few plover, being all worth mentioning, besides the sand-hill cranes.

Arrived at the lake region, we take heart at pioneer towns, — so they call them; nay, I should say cities, — which betoken our approach to civilization. The first is Leaf City,[1] actually down on the maps of the day, though there is but a single house there. We camp in the neighborhood, and our songs, for long life in the wilds has made us a roistering set, ring to the praises of the mayor, the board of aldermen, and the common council of the great city, who have turned out *en masse* to supply us bountifully with the products of their wide-extending territory. Between this and the Chippeway Agency, near Crow Wing, there is but a single house, also dignified with a name, Wadena, on the maps.

[1] See Appendix.

Once on the east bank of the Mississippi, the signs of settlement multiply, and after a day's delay, as before mentioned, to dry our stores at Crow Wing (which we improve by a charming visit at Fort Ripley), we reach in two days St. Cloud, one day's staging from St. Paul, and on our former line of travel. After one more journey with the caravan, the whole party grows impatient of the oxen, and, some on foot and some in the stage, make their way to St. Paul, a day in advance of the train, twenty-two days from Fort Garry. Here our connection with the world is complete. We have regained civilization, after an absence from it of barely less than three months (June 16–Sept. 13), during which we have travelled about thirty-five hundred miles.